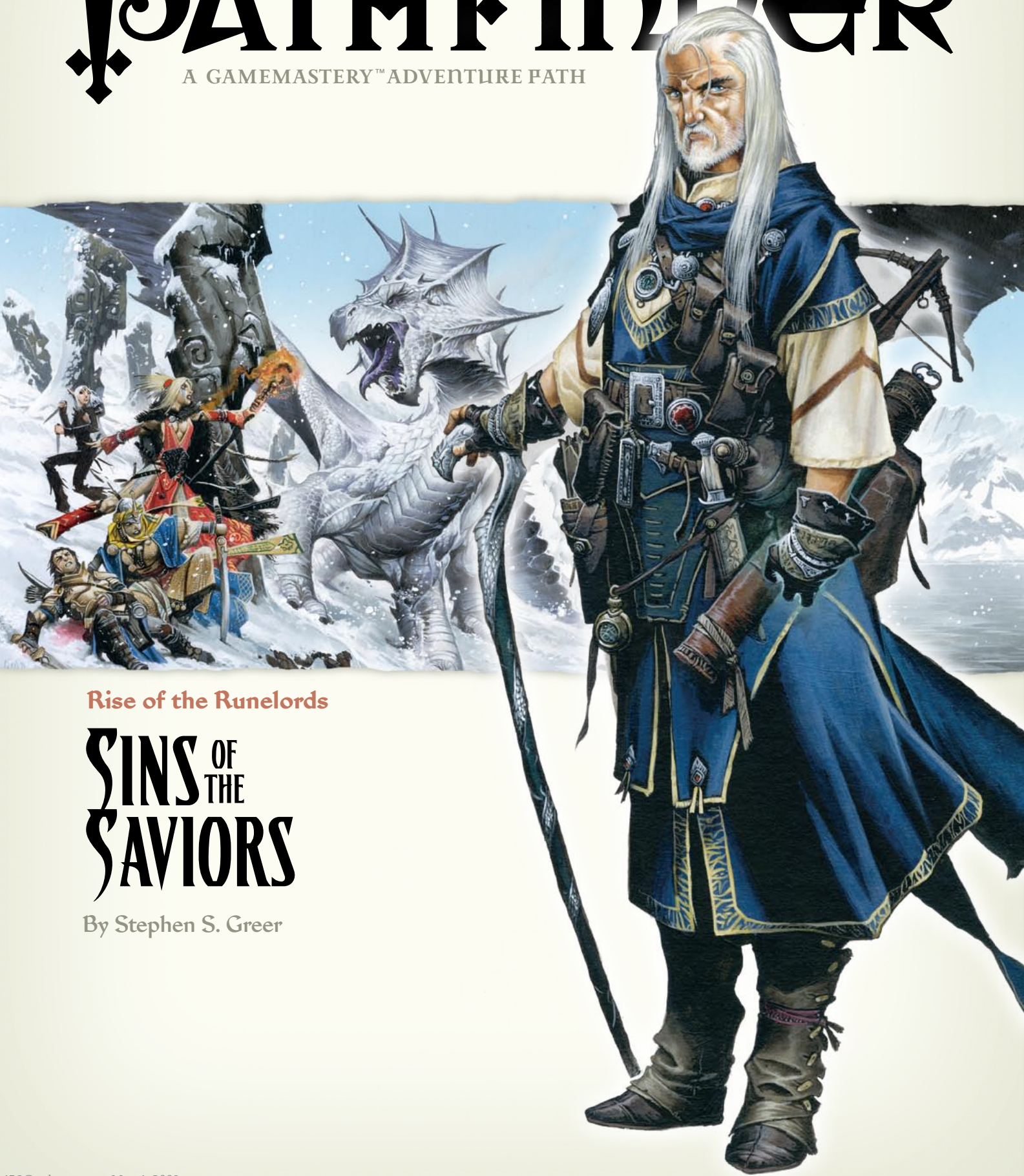
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A GameMastery™ Adventure Path



Rise of the Runelords

Sins of the Saviors

By Stephen S. Greer

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ADVENTURE PATH ✵ PART 5 of 6

Rise of the Runelords:

Sins of the Saviors



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SEVEN TIMES AS DEADLY

Wow, it's taken four whole months, but I've finally managed to distract Boss Jacobs long enough to poke my head out of the word mines and write one of these. (You'd be amazed how far a grown man will chase a pigeon disguised as an archaeopteryx.) So, sorry you've had to weather him for so long—he tends to think he has a lot to say.

Regardless! This month we've got "Sins of the Saviors," Steve Greer's massive, 11-part adventure that pits PCs against the runelords' heptamerous dungeon-laboratory, a 10,000-year-old battlefield between the seven deadly sins. A hardcore, old-school dungeon crawl full of riddles, magic traps, *mirrors of opposition,* flaming ceilings, teleporters, demons, crazed wizards, dragons—you know, all the reasons you play the game. It's all in there.

Mr. Greer is no stranger to adventure writing, being at least in part responsible for such adventures in *Dungeon* magazine as "Fiend's Embrace," "Tides of Dread," and the Seeds of Sehan campaign arc. This, however, is Steve's first time writing a chapter in an adventure path solo—not that you'd ever know it from what you're about to read. Holding his own with some of the best names in the biz, Steve's job for "Sins of the Saviors" was to create a dungeon that revolves around the theme of the seven deadly sins. Rather than just cobbling together some dusty old vault with a few sin-related traps, though, he blew by all our expectations, creating the huge, seven-in-one dungeon known as Runeforge. The runelords' arcane research lab manages to not just feel distinctly Thassilonian, but each wing's embodiment of a particular sin and the way each has (or hasn't) held up over the past few thousand years turns what could have just been a dungeon delve with a sin-shtick into one of the most dynamic site-based adventures we've seen in a while. It's a dungeon with politics—evil, sin-centered politics your PCs are all too likely to have to become embroiled in if they're going to have any chance in Xin-Shalast next month.

So, if your PCs make it to the end of Rise of the Runelords, make sure they stop to thank Mr. Greer, because they're not going to make it much farther without what's coming next.

THE PATHFINDER PROJECT

I have something of a confession to make. Through the past few months we've been running a series of experiments. Specifically,

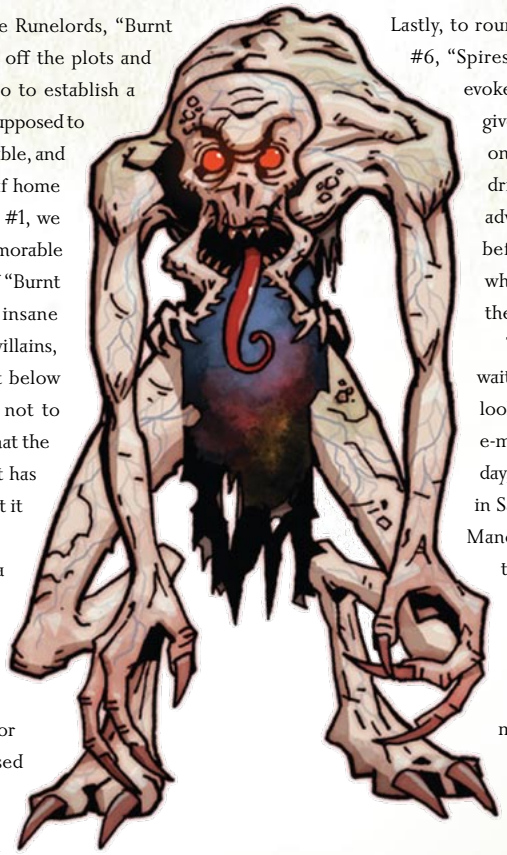
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we've been running a series of experiments on you and your roleplaying group (sorry about any side effects).

The overarching hypothesis: 33 years of gaming history has only scratched the surface of what you can do with roleplaying storytelling. With that in mind, we predicted that some of the most imaginative authors in gaming could create some honestly new and exciting adventures, given free reign to write the stories they're passionate about. And that belief has been at work behind every word in *Pathfinder* thus far.

To test this theory, we have two variables to work with: the adventures in every volume of *Pathfinder,* and you and your gaming group (you wouldn't believe the price of guinea pigs these days). So let's go through what we've seen so far.



As the starting point for Rise of the Runelords, "Burnt Offerings" was meant to not just kick off the plots and themes of the adventure path, but also to establish a "base" for the adventurers. The PCs are supposed to be able to go out, get into all sorts of trouble, and still come home and be safe. But what if home is where the adventure is? In *Pathfinder* #1, we asked the question "Can you have a memorable adventure at home?" Over the course of "Burnt Offerings," we see home raided by insane goblins, have it infiltrated by vengeful villains, and discover an ancient evil ruin right below the townfolks' basements. And that's not to mention all the scandals and intrigues that the locals propagate themselves. Sandpoint has all kinds of troubles, but do they prevent it from being a nice little burg to live in?

The question of *Pathfinder* #2 is a bit more blatant: "Can an adventure establish the moody dread of a Hammer horror film?" "The Skinsaw Murders" appropriately begins with murder and moves on to misty farmlands, an asylum for the insane, a mysterious house possessed by malevolent forces, and a cult led by a shape-changing monster. We even sent our artists reference pictures of Christopher Lee on this one, and its no coincidence that one of our favorite British authors, Richard Pett, got roped into the writing. But does the adventure feel like Vincent Price should be the GM?

With *Pathfinder* #3 we might have concerned some folks. Even though we had just finished a pretty grim story, we turned right around and set up another, asking, "Can an adventure capture the feel of an American-style, backwoods horror film?" With movies like *Deliverance, The Hills Have Eyes,* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* in mind, Nick Logue jumped right into "The Hook Mountain Massacre," dredging up all manner of gore and grotesquery in an enthusiastic definition of the word "ogrish." But were the Grauls and Kreegs really unsettling like the best slaughterfests of the seventies?

Moving to a more historical question, *Pathfinder* #4 asks, "Can you add to a classic?" It's no coincidence that "Fortress of the Stone Giants" sounds like it might fit in with adventures about frost giant jarls and fire giant kings. Wolfgang Baur's exploration into the lives of one of gaming's most underrated giants attempts to draw upon the nostalgia of the *Against the Giants* adventures, all in the hopes of conjuring up memories of towering brutes that die hard and hit even harder.

That brings us about up to speed with *Pathfinder* #5. The question of the month being, "Can the good guys also be bad guys?" In "Sins of the Saviors," the PCs find themselves in a dungeon of sin, where their own vices might grant them considerable benefits. By embracing the sins of ancient villains, they gain advantages they might need to defeat a greater evil. The adventure doesn't ask the heroes to go bad, but it does put them into something of a moral quandary. Will adventurers embrace their darker sides to accomplish the greater good?

Lastly, to round out the adventure path with *Pathfinder* #6, "Spires of Xin-Shalast" asks "Can an adventure evoke the feel of discovering a lost city?" I'll not give away too much about Greg Vaughan's tale on the top of the world, but every element drives at making the players feel like they're adventuring somewhere they've never been before. We're looking forward to hearing whether or not your heroes really feel like they're discovering somewhere new.

That's what we've been up to, and now we're waiting on the result. So far, though, things are looking quite positive. From the mountains of e-mails and messageboard posts we read every day, it sounds like many groups are settling down in Sandpoint, getting creeped out in Foxglove Manor, and seriously getting their stomachs turned by Hook Mountain. And we couldn't be happier. This feedback is really what tells us if the adventures are doing what we want them to do and constantly suggests ways we can make them even better. Even more so, it tells us which of your tastes match up with our own and informs our thinking for future "experiments."

So dust off your lab coat, get online, and tell us how your experiments have worked. Did the party mention *Steading of the Hill Giant Chief?* Did your paladin refuse to wield a weapon forged of sin? Did anyone get altitude sickness? We're eager to find out, and we have a lot more trials for you to run. But for now, back in the maze! We've got a mega-dungeon full of ancient magic, immortal sins, and moral quandaries for you and your PCs to test out!



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SINS OF THE SAVIORS

RISE OF THE RUNELORDS: CHAPTER FIVE

Hidden in a remote mountain, its doorstep doubling as a dragon's lair, an ancient and mysterious dungeon known as Runeforge lies abandoned. During the height of the Thassilonian Empire, Runeforge served as a place for the empire's most creative and gifted wizards to come together and share knowledge for the glory of their runelord masters. With the empire's cataclysmic fall, Runeforge was cut off from the world. For ten thousand years, it has remained isolated within a timeless pocket of its own reality, and in that time, strange and sinister things have grown within its arcane halls. Now, with the resurrection of the Runelord of Greed, a new menace has risen from the past and set his sights on the Runeforge's ancient magic.

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

That Thassilon ushered in an age of wonder is evident in the monuments that survived the passage of thousands of years, yet these monuments were but the creations of the slaves of this empire. Even mightier were the runelord's works of magic—the transmutation of flesh into gold, the conjuration of creatures akin to mountains, and the transformation of the landscape of Golarion itself according to their whims being but samples of their might. Yet on their own, the seven runelords did not command every aspect of magic. Their focused studies granted them great power in their chosen areas of specialization, but at the cost of two opposing schools of magical thought. No one runelord could grasp magic entirely, and thus their works were limited by their own inadequacies.

In response to this failing, the runelords agreed to the construction of a shared laboratory of sorts in a region held neutral by their seven nations. They named this place Runeforge, and here, practitioners of each of their seven specialties could work in tandem with one another, with little fear of sabotage, mockery, or interference, in an environment untainted by rivalries and grudges. It was intended to be a place of pure magic, where masters of each Thassilonian specialty could work and confer and create. The seven runelords bound themselves by edict that they themselves would never directly interfere with or even enter Runeforge, for fear that their presence would hamper the work being performed there. Each runelord chose from among his servants those who best represented his desires and goals, then sealed those servants in Runeforge using their own magic. Runeforge provided nourishment, comfort, and shelter for those within—servitude in Runeforge was a great honor, and a post held for life. Once a season, the inhabitants convened in the central chamber, around a well of power at the heart of the Sihedron Rune, and there they reported to their runelords the natures of their discoveries and advancements in magic. The well could even function as a portal, allowing the transport of discoveries and creations to their masters in the seven distant capitals of Thassilon.

The work done in Runeforge was anything but safe, and often the wizards within its walls succumbed to madness or were slain by errors in judgment or experiments gone tragically awry. Although there was no shortage of replacements, the runelords had little interest in allowing just anyone into the complex. Only those of keen wit and quick mind could learn the ritual of opening to enter Runeforge—a restriction that ensured that only the most gifted wizards became its inhabitants.

Within months of the arcane laboratory's foundation, the runelords were hard at work, searching secretly for ways to influence Runeforge without revealing their interests to each other. Unfortunately for them, they had been too thorough in their initial magic, for fear that the other runelords would do precisely the same thing. For many decades, then, Runeforge functioned as intended: neutral ground for masters of Thassilonian magic to learn and study.

Some of the final works to come out of Runeforge were various methods of hibernation—the runelords knew the end was nigh and tasked their Runeforge factions with methods of surviving even the greatest of catastrophes. Each faction came up with a different solution, and when Thassilon did finally collapse, Runeforge's discoveries served the runelords well. As they went into hibernation, Runeforge carried on—its inhabitants had already divorced themselves from the world to the extent that even the fall of their homeland barely phased them. They carried on their work while chaos reigned in the world outside. As the years wore into centuries, some of the groups in Runeforge died out, while others grew more powerful. As the centuries stretched into millennia, the complex's denizens succumbed to madness, dementia, and depression. With the end of Thassilon, no new blood came into Runeforge, and nothing came out.

Today, the remaining denizens of Runeforge are as much its prisoners as its caretakers. Those few who have survived do so by embracing the darker side of magic, while others gave up, leaving their ageless minions to carry on the work. Vital clues preserved in the notes and workings of the complex hint at not only how each of the runelords planned on surviving the fall of Thassilon, but also reveal how to undo the magic that has preserved them for the past 10,000 years.

Adventure Summary

When a mysterious sinkhole appears in Sandpoint, the PCs investigate and find deeper Thassilonian ruins below their hometown—ruins that contain clues to the location of Runeforge, the site of many Thassilonian discoveries and inventions, including the various methods the runelords used to enter hibernation as their empire collapsed. Following these clues, the PCs must travel north to the mountain Rimeskull and enter Runeforge. Once inside, they find the place is still inhabited, tended by Thassilonian wizards who have carried on the traditions of their masters for thousands of years. By exploring Runeforge, the PCs can uncover the method by which Karzoug intends to return to the world of the living—and in so doing, find the secret to his defeat.

PART ONE: THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

Considering all that has happened—the bloodshed, the lives lost, and the miles upon miles of Varisian soil journeyed across to stop the machinations and minions of an ancient tyrant—it might seem ironic that the key to defeating the rise of Runelord Karzoug has lain dormant below Sandpoint the whole time.

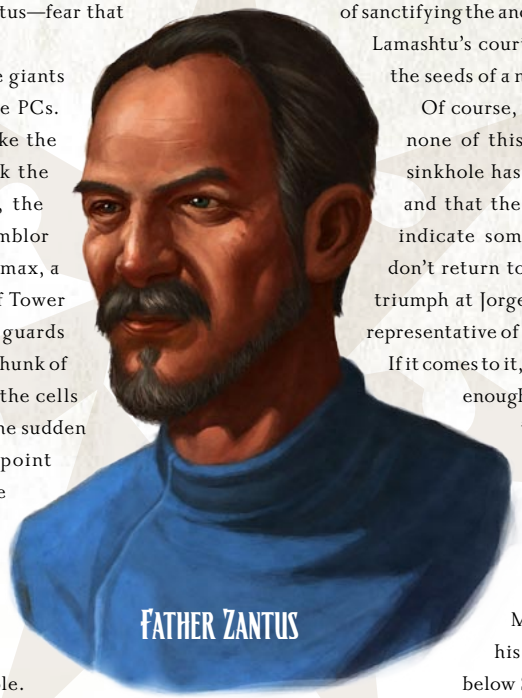
Sandpoint has been through a lot, including a goblin raid, slaughter at the local Glassworks, several grisly murders, and most recently a full-blown assault by giants and a dragon. It's certainly a testament to the townsfolk's resilience that they have carried on as hardily as they have. Of course, they've had protectors at hand to help them through these times of peril, and when trouble stirs anew in the region, it's to these protectors the good folk of Sandpoint turn.

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This new development is something altogether more subtle and disturbing than invasions by goblins or giants. Had this development come before the events of Goblin Day (as it has come to be called), it's likely it would have been ignored. In light of all the recent troubles, though, several of Sandpoint's leaders—in particular a worried Father Zantus—fear that it portends something dire.

These new developments began after the giants raided Sandpoint and were repulsed by the PCs. Several days after the PCs left town to take the fight to Jorgenfist, an earth tremor shook the Lost Coast. No stranger to earthquakes, the folk of Sandpoint weathered the minor temblor with ease, but then, at the earthquake's climax, a sinkhole suddenly yawned in the middle of Tower Street, just north of the Garrison. A few guards were injured and the sinkhole swallowed a chunk of the Garrison's north wall, but fortunately, the cells in the north side were all vacant. It wasn't the sudden sinkhole that gave the leaders of Sandpoint alarm, though. What worries them are the sounds that come from the pit's rubble-choked depths every night. After a group of guards sent into the sinkhole's depths vanished, Sheriff Hemlock roped off the pit's perimeter, established sentries, and forbade anyone else from entering the hole. This would be a job for folk better equipped to deal with danger—folk like the PCs.



Father Zantus

The sinkhole appears at about the time the PCs defeat Mokmurian, for with this final decisive blow, Karzoug's *runewell* (already gorged on the greedy souls of all the giants the PCs slew on their journey through Jorgenfist) achieved a new level of potency. The well is now charged enough that Karzoug can begin the final stages of his wakening. Just as the initial activation of the *runewell* several years ago caused ripples in other *runewells* scattered throughout Varisia, this one produced a much stronger burst of magical power. The *runewell* below Sandpoint (area **B13** of the Catacombs of Wrath; see *Pathfinder* #1) erupted with power, and it was this eruption that caused the destruction of the rock above and the eventual sinkhole in Sandpoint.

The eruption did not go unnoticed by the gods, either. When the sudden rush of magic surged through a site once sacred to her worship, Lamashtu reacted instantly. From her lair in the Abyss, she was able to use the rush of energy as a beacon for her own powers—and when she cast her triple gaze over the region, she saw the unquiet spirit of one of her greatest (and most ancient) minions—the Thassilonian thaumaturge Xaliasa, known in his final days as the Scribbler. No sooner did Lamashtu sense his troubled spirit haunting the region than the magical eruption began to abate, and before the link vanished, Lamashtu infused the Scribbler with her divine grace. She resurrected him as a divine guardian of her ancient temple, charging the Scribbler not only with its protection, but also with its reawakening.

The Scribbler rose from a pool of unholy water in an ancient shrine to Lamashtu deeper still than the Catacombs of Wrath. Although his resurrection granted him new powers, as a divine guardian he was unable to travel far from the site of his rebirth. He has therefore busied himself with alternative methods of sanctifying the ancient temple, calling forth from Lamashtu's court terrible monsters to serve as the seeds of a new cult.

Of course, the leaders of Sandpoint know none of this, yet—they know only that a sinkhole has consumed a portion of town, and that the noises coming from that pit indicate something collapsed. If the PCs don't return to Sandpoint shortly after their triumph at Jorgenfist, they are contacted by a representative of the town as quickly as possible. If it comes to it, Father Zantus scrapes together enough money to pay for a *sending* spell to call them back to town.

It's likely, however, that the PCs head back to Sandpoint soon enough on their own, particularly if they found the notes in Mokmurian's lair that spoke of his concern about the chambers below Sandpoint housing a "traitor to Runelord Karzoug." This traitor is, of course, the Scribbler, and while the PCs might hope to find in him an ally against Karzoug (certainly the Scribbler possesses information key to the PCs' success against the runelord), they'll find that in this case, the enemy of their enemy is not necessarily their friend.

Meeting with Father Zantus

Whatever the cause of the PCs' return to Sandpoint, they are greeted by throngs of excited hero-worshipers and grateful citizens. The talk of the town is the Tower Street Sinkhole, although the PCs' return eclipses some of that—most of the citizens assume the PCs have returned to investigate the sinkhole, in any event. Once the initial hubbub of the heroes' welcome wears off, the PCs are approached by a bashful-looking acolyte of Desna who gives them a message: Father Zantus wishes to speak to them about the sinkhole as soon as possible at the Sandpoint Cathedral.

Both Sheriff Hemlock and Mayor Deverin are there waiting for the PCs at the cathedral with Zantus. They ask for a quick recounting of the PCs' adventures in Jorgenfist if they haven't learned of them already, listening wide-eyed to tales of giants, dire bears, headless ogres, and horrors from beyond time itself. Soon enough, Father Zantus clears his throat and speaks upon the matter at hand.

"Of course, we're all very pleased to hear of your successes. Sandpoint owes you a huge debt of thanks for ensuring its safety yet again. And while

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I'd like nothing better than to let you relax and enjoy a well-earned break from your adventures, you've doubtless heard about our newest problem. A few days ago, the ground collapsed just north of the Garrison, right in the middle of Tower Street. The north wall of the Garrison took some damage, and while fortunately no one was seriously hurt when the sinkhole appeared, that's not the case anymore. The guards the sheriff sent into the pit to investigate never returned. That very night, we all heard something horrible down there: dogs howling—like no dogs I've heard before—and bloodcurdling screams. Sheriff's roped the sinkhole off, and so far nothing's come up out of it, but those sounds are growing every night. Whatever's trapped in there wants out, and by the sounds of it, whatever it is isn't too keen on emerging friendly."

The three look at the PCs with hope and expectation—if the PCs don't volunteer to explore the sinkhole and deal with whatever's awakened in its depths, Father Zantus comes right out and asks them to. If the PCs have already set a precedent for asking for payment for saving Sandpoint, Mayor Deverin has approved a reward of 2,000 gp to be paid to the PCs if they can quiet the howls and screams—a relatively paltry sum for high-level characters, but a fortune for the town of Sandpoint. With a DC 30 Diplomacy check, Deverin can be talked up to a reward as high as 5,000 gp, but after this, Sandpoint is likely to look to less expensive adventurers for protection.

Back into the Catacombs

The sinkhole itself has stabilized at a width of 30 feet, reaching the diameter of the street and consuming a portion of the Garrison wall to the south—several basement jail cells hang open in the sloping southern wall of the sinkhole. The sinkhole itself is 15 feet deep—a DC 12 Spot check is required to see a narrow opening along its northwest side at the deepest point, which seems to be a tunnel leading underground. Clambering down the steep slopes of the sinkhole is a DC 15 Climb check, unless the route from the exposed jail cells is used. That is the route the first group of guards took into the hole—it's only a DC 10 Climb check there.

Exploration of the tunnel accessed from the sinkhole's depths reveals a short flight of stairs down and a 5-foot-wide passageway beyond. The sinkhole's collapse caused most of area **B13** of the Catacombs of Wrath (see *Pathfinder* #1) to cave in. All that remains is a narrow passage that runs along the northeastern wall, turning left at area **B13A** and leading almost to area **B13B** before ending. The double doors to area **B12** have fallen, allowing easy access to the rest of the catacombs beyond. Eventually, the PCs should reach the stairs at area **B10**—stairs that until recently were blocked with rubble, but have now been cleared by the efforts of the catacomb's new caretaker.

The strange and disturbing sounds that emanate from the sinkhole generally start an hour before midnight and persist for several hours before abating. The sounds consist primarily of eerie dog-like howls that seem to echo a bit more than expected, but mixed in with these howls are periodic shrieks of a much more humanoid feel. These howls are mostly from the pack of shadow mastiffs the Scribbler has called into this world to guard the shrine—the more humanoid cries are the shrieks of the Scribbler himself. His screams seem to be nonsense cries of rage and hatred, amplified by his supernatural fury and distorted by the distance so as to be unintelligible. The howls themselves can be identified as coming from shadow mastiffs with a DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check. The baying carries with it the signature fear of the shadow mastiff's howl—those at the sinkhole's depths or in the Catacombs of Wrath beyond place themselves in range of the effect and must make a DC 15 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds.

Xaliasa's Story

Near the end of the Thassilonian Empire, a man named Xaliasa commanded one of Alaznist's Hellfire Flumes—one of several defensive fortifications along the border between her empire and that of Karzoug. Xaliasa was given much freedom in how he ran his Hellfire Flume, as long as he continued researching methods of producing and perfecting sinspawn for Alaznist's army and maintained the defensive line against invaders from Shalast to the east. Yet Xaliasa served another—he had succumbed to greed and, in secret, Karzoug bought his allegiance, transforming him into a double-agent of sorts. In his role as defender of the Hellfire Flume, he also served Karzoug with regular reports on Alaznist's troop movements.

Further complicating Xaliasa's life was his devotion to a third master—Lamashtu herself. As his role as a double-agent grew more demanding, Xaliasa grew more distressed and more insane. His true loyalties increasingly lay with Lamashtu, and he foresaw a point in the near future when his treason between Alaznist and Karzoug would place him in great danger.

Xaliasa's answer was to use, in secret, his contacts with both runelords, to discover the way to the Runeforge, perhaps the only safe place where he could retreat if either runelord decided he was no longer of use. Discovering the secret to entering Runeforge was no easy task, but only a few days before the empire was destined to fail, Xaliasa made the discovery. When Thassilon collapsed and the world shook and the oceans swallowed Alaznist's empire, Xaliasa's plans for escape proved inadequate. He had planned for the wrath of one, perhaps two runelords, and was ill-prepared for the rage of an entire world. The supportive wards that protected all of Thassilon's monuments and attendant complexes from erosion and decay kept many of the chambers below the Hellfire Flume intact, but only barely. Xaliasa had the misfortune to be in one of the rooms that collapsed—and with his death he took from the world one of the secret ways to enter Runeforge.

Ten thousand years later, Xaliasa's insane spirit awakened again with the surge of magical energies from the minor *runewell of wrath* in his lair. And now that Lamashtu has brought him back fully, the resurrected thaumaturge is eager to reestablish his rule in a world emptied of runelords. Only the fact that his life is now bound to this shrine has kept him from emerging into Sandpoint above to claim it for his own. Given a short amount of time, however, he can build enough minions to do that job for him.

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In his new manifestation as a divine guardian, Xaliasa has become something more than human. Now closely attuned to Lamashtu herself, his mind has become even more warped and twisted. He no longer sees himself as an independent agent of Lamashtu, but instead as her incarnation. His voice speaks her will and his hands scribe her laws and desires. Yet over the 10,000 years his soul has lain dormant, Xaliasa has fallen far behind on his patron's wishes. He now spends nearly all of his time recording the wisdom of Lamashtu on any surface available. Given his limited mobility and lack of empty pages, Xaliasa has turned to the walls of his shrine, decorating them with countless scriptures and prayers and invocations to the Mother of Monsters. He is transforming her shrine into her holy text, and when he has completed this task, he will turn his attention to the world above.

In his new incarnation, he has become the Scribbler.

The Scribbler (EL 14)

The Scribbler's ability to dimension door at will in the shrine gives him incredible mobility—as a result, he is not simply encountered in one room in the dungeon, but in many. The Scribbler uses the same hit-and-run tactics against the PCs as he used on the guards Sheriff Hemlock sent into the shrine, but against the party he quickly realizes he'll need more than just a few seconds of combat to defeat them.

At the same time, the Scribbler knows the world above has moved on. He desperately wants to "catch up" so he can more ably direct his minions into the world. He knows that knowledge is power. To that end, he attempts to extract information about the world above from the PCs before attacking them. He becomes aware of their intrusion into his domain as soon as they pass through the secret door in area **A1**, and immediately contacts them. The Scribbler relies on *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *obscuring mist*, and the natural darkness and shadows to remain hidden while he speaks to the PCs. Perhaps his greatest defense in this arena is *guards and wards*, which he uses daily to protect the shrine.

The Scribbler's questions should follow along these lines: "What happened to Thassilon?" "What nation has replaced it?" "Who rules the lands above today?" "Where is the seat of their power?" "What became of Runelord Karzoug and Runelord Alaznist?" "Who wields powerful magic today?" Keep asking questions along these lines—if the PCs seem resistant to answering them, or if they demand questions in return, the Scribbler willingly plays along. He answers what questions he can, proposing a one-for-one exchange of information. You can use the Scribbler to fill in the PCs on a lot of the background of Thassilon and Karzoug's role therein and to impress upon them just how powerful and evil the runelords were. The Scribbler obviously knows very little about what caused the fall of Thassilon, but if asked how the runelords can be defeated, he grows coy. He mentions Runeforge, calling it "a place of learning created by the runelords but grown beyond their control." He admits it was the one place in Thassilon over which the runelords had no direct influence—the one place they could not visit, for fear of enraging the other six and causing an immense war. He postulates that a runelord's entrance into Runeforge might have prompted the event that brought Thassilon to an end. Certainly, if any secrets to defeating them existed in ancient Thassilon, those secrets would be hidden still within Runeforge's walls. The Scribbler is eager to brag about how he discovered the key to entering Runeforge, as well as its location, but this is one piece of information he's unwilling to directly share with the PCs. He might, however, note that he has hidden the map to Runeforge and the key to its door in the writings on the walls of this shrine. While this is true, the Scribbler tells the PCs this primarily to lure them deeper into the shrine, so when he feels that he has learned everything he can from them, he'll have an even greater advantage in combat.

Once the Scribbler has satisfied his need for information or the PCs prove unhelpful, he turns his attention to the second stage of his plan—killing them, harvesting their magic and gear, and turning their bodies into undead minions. He announces this shift by declaring, "The time for talk has come to an end, my sucklings!" He prefers to strike at the PCs in area **A6**, as this room provides him and his minions the most space for moving around in combat, but he certainly won't limit himself to just there. In each of the following rooms, brief notes on the Scribbler's battle tactics (as well as the effects of his *guards and wards*) are given. Since he can be encountered anywhere in the dungeon, his stat block is given below. The thaumaturge class is similar in many ways to the cleric class, save that the thaumaturge devotes his faith and loyalty to a demon lord, effectively selling his soul to the demon in return for his powers.

The Scribbler **CR 14**

Male divine guardian human thaumaturge of Lamashtu 12/fighter 1
(*Book of Fiends* 10, *Advanced Bestiary* 60)
CE Medium humanoid (chaotic, evil)
Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 10 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +6
Aura unsettling presence (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 24
(+8 armor, +4 deflection, +1 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 102 (13 HD; 12d6+1d10+52); fast healing 5
Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9
Defensive Abilities ability healing; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects, poison; **SR** 24
Weakness bound to the faith

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.
Melee *fanged falchion* +15/+10 (2d4+9/18–20)
Ranged *+1 cold iron returning dagger* +8 (1d4+7/19–20)
Special Attacks dimension door, feat of strength 1/day (+12 enhancement to Strength for 1 round), instant summons 2/day
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)
3/day—*alarm* (1 already used), *knock*
1/day—*arcane lock*, *augury*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *commune*, *dismissal*, *forbiddance*, *guards and wards* (already used), *hold portal*

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Spells Known (CL 12th)

6th—*heal*, quickened *spiritual weapon*, *stoneskin*[D] (DC 22), *summon monster VI*

5th—quickened *divine favor*, extended *greater magic weapon* (already cast), *righteous might*[D], *spell resistance*, *summon monster V*

4th—*confusion*[D] (DC 20), *cure critical wounds*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, extended *magic vestment* (already cast)

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *nondetection*[D] (already cast), *protection from energy*, *summon monster III*

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *hold person* (DC 18), *invisibility*[D], *silence* (DC 18)

1st—*command* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*, *disguise self*[D], *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *sanctuary* (DC 17)

0—*cure minor wounds* (3), *guidance* (3)

D domain spell; **Domains** Strength, Trickery

TACTICS

Before Combat Every day, the Scribbler wards the complex by casting *alarm* and *guards and wards*. He also casts *nondetection*, extended *magic vestment*, and extended *greater magic weapon* every day after finishing his daily prayer to Lamashtu. If he has time just before combat begins, he casts *stoneskin*, *spell resistance*, *freedom of movement*, *bull's strength*, and *bear's endurance* on himself—all of these effects are calculated in his stat block above.

During Combat The Scribbler's strength is in his magic. In the first 2 rounds of combat, he uses his instant summons ability to first cast *summon monster VI* and then *summon monster V* as free actions (summoning 1d3 shadow mastiffs on round 1 and a barghest on round 2). While these summoned monsters engage his foes, he casts *righteous might* and then *divine power*. On round 3, he casts quickened *divine favor* and then enters combat, casting a quickened *spiritual weapon* on round 4 to attack a spellcaster or healer.

Morale The Scribbler dimension doors to the hallway outside of area **A10** if brought below 10 hit points, then hides inside his lair and waits for his fast healing to fix him up before returning to continue a fight with intruders. If confronted in area **A10**, he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 19, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Extend Spell, Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Familiar, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Bluff +24, Concentration +19, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +8, Perform (poetry) +11, Search –2, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +12, Spot +6

Languages Abyssal, Giant, Thassilonian

SQ blessed life, milky eye, raspy voice, sacred site, scaly skin, summon familiar (the Scribbler has not yet bothered to call a new quasit familiar to replace Erylium)

Gear *+1 breastplate*, *fanged falchion*, *+1 cold iron returning dagger*, *cloak of Charisma* +2, 750 gp in diamond dust

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ability Healing (Ex) The Scribbler heals 1 point of ability damage per round in each damaged ability score.

Blessed Life (Ex) The Scribbler does not age or breathe and does not require food, drink, or sleep.

Bound to the Faith (Ex) A cleric of Lamashtu can rebuke or command the Scribbler as if he were a 6 HD undead creature.

Dimension Door (Su) The scribbler can dimension door (as the spell of the same name, CL 13th) to reach any location within the Shrine of Lamashtu under Sandpoint.

Divine Swiftness (Ex) The Scribbler gains a +4 bonus on initiative checks and his base speed is 60 feet (or 40 feet when wearing his *+1 breastplate*).

Divine Skills (Ex) The scribbler has a +5 racial bonus on Listen, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

Instant Summons (Su) Twice a day, the Scribbler can cast a prepared *summon monster* spell as a free action, provided the monster summoned hails from the Abyss (i.e., is a demon or a Chaotic Evil fiendish creature).



THE SCRIBBLER

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Milky Eye (Su) The Scribbler's milky eye imparts a –2 penalty on his Search and Spot checks, but also grants him blindsight to 10 feet.

Raspy Voice (Ex) The Scribbler's voice is harsh and unpleasant, granting a +3 bonus on Intimidate checks but a –3 penalty on Perform (oratory or sing) checks.

Sacred Site (Ex) The Scribbler is bound to the shrine of Lamashtu (areas **A1**–**A10**), and has been charged by Lamashtu with keeping the site sacred and free from intrusion. Should the Scribbler ever move beyond these areas, he loses the divine guardian template and his spellcasting ability until he atones and re-enters the site within one week. Otherwise, he loses the template permanently and takes 6d6 points of Constitution drain as his body adjusts to the loss.

Scaly Skin (Ex) The Scribbler's skin is covered with a layer of transparent scales that grant him a +2 natural armor bonus.

Unsettling Presence (Su) Animals within 30 feet of the Scribbler must make a DC 22 Will save or become hostile to him. This aura also grants him a +3 bonus on Intimidate checks. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Lamashtu's Shrine

The shrine itself has the same architectural style as the Catacombs of Wrath above, since these chambers were engineered and constructed by the same sources. Ceiling height averages 8 feet in the hallways and 15 feet in chambers. There is no illumination in the shrine itself (with the exception of area **A6**), as the Scribbler relies on blindsight and his own memory of the place to get around, and all of his minions can see in the dark. Time has not been kind to many chambers of the shrine, and in several areas rubble has blocked off passageways or parts of rooms. What lies past these collapsed chambers is left to the GM—there could be numerous other chambers further in, deep below Sandpoint and awaiting discovery, but those chambers are beyond the scope of the Rise of the Runelords adventure path.

The Scribbler has a wide array of spell-like abilities useful in defending his lair. He maintains silent *alarms* at areas **A1**, **A6**, and **A9**, and has locked every door in the shrine with an *arcane lock* (with the exception of the secret door in area **A1**—he knows well that a magic aura on a secret door ironically makes it easier to discover if any intruders can detect magic). He's avoided using *forbiddance* in his shrine, since that reduces his ability to use dimension door to move about the place, but he has placed one in area **A10** to protect it from intrusion.

The greatest magical protection in the shrine is that granted by *guards and wards*. The entire shrine is protected by this spell at all times, warding the complex as follows:

Fog: This fills all corridors, reducing vision (including darkvision) to 5 feet and providing concealment.

Webs: Area **A1** is clogged with webs from this spell.

Confusion: Every time a character comes to an intersection, there's a 50% chance he takes the opposite route from the one intended. There's no save to resist this, but spell resistance does apply (CL 13th).

Fanged Falchion

Aura Moderate transmutation; **CL** 11th

Slot —; **Price** 22,375 gp

DESCRIPTION

The blade of this brutal-looking falchion is serrated, forming fangs for the stylized etching of a jackal's profile on the shimmering metal. These weapons are fashioned in honor of Lamashtu and are favored by her most powerful cultists as weapons not only for battle, but for sacrifice.

A *fanged falchion* is a *+1 unholy falchion*—wounds caused by the weapon's serrated edge are horrifically ragged and bleed profusely. Whenever a *fanged falchion* scores a successful critical hit, the sword's blade animates and "chews" at its victim. In addition to doing damage for the critical hit, this horrific chewing deals 2 points of Constitution damage and forces the victim to make a DC 15 saving throw to avoid being stunned for 1 round. Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to this Constitution damage and the stun effect.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *harm*, *unholy blight*, creator must be evil; **Cost** 11,375 gp, 880 XP

Lost Doors: All of the doors in the complex (with the exception of the secret door in area **A1**) are covered by *silent images* to make them appear to be plain walls. A creature that interacts with this image can attempt a DC 22 Will save to see through the illusion.

Suggestion: The Scribbler has placed a potent *suggestion* beyond the door leading from area **A9** to area **A10**—see area **A9** for more details.

The entire dungeon radiates a strong abjuration aura as a result of the *guards and wards* spell—*dispel magic* can remove only one specific effect at a time.

Writing on the Walls

Thassilonian writing covers nearly every available surface in the shrine—floors, ceilings, and walls. These are the result of the Scribbler's obsession, and most of the words recount prayers, scriptures, and invocations associated with Lamashtu. If the PCs can read Thassilonian and study these writings, refer to the article on Lamashtu that begins on page 64 to see what kinds of topics are covered.

Among these scribblings, though, are hidden the stanzas of the Scribbler's Rhyme. In his pride over discovering the location of Runeforge, the Scribbler recorded the route to this location among his writings. In order to determine the route to Runeforge and the means for its entrance, the PCs must discover all five stanzas and arrange them in the proper order. These five stanzas are presented in the Scribbler's Rhyme sidebar. If the PCs can't read Thassilonian or don't have access to magic like *comprehend*

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languages, they may have to return to these chambers with an expert on the language, such as Sandpoint's local Thassilon expert, Brodert Quink.

Deciphering the Scribbler's Rhyme

In order to understand the Scribbler's Rhyme, the players should puzzle out things on their own. If this becomes problematic for your players, a DC 25 skill check should reveal a stanza's correct interpretation. This skill check can be anything associated with poetry, such as Craft (poetry), Perform (act, comedy, oratory, or sing), Profession (poet), or bardic knowledge. Likewise, a DC 20 check can arrange the stanzas in their proper order.

The correct interpretation of the Scribbler's rhyme is as follows:

First Stanza: This stanza establishes what the rhyme in total is about, introducing the idea of Runeforge as a place for wizards to perfect and hone their craft.

Second Stanza: Here, the word "mirror" is a metaphor for lake (a somewhat common usage in ancient Thassilonian poetry); a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check is enough to note that in Varisia, Lake Stormunder is known for its plentiful hot springs and geysers. The stanza further mentions "seven faces" that are "encircled." At this point, a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check is enough to remember the mysterious circle of seven stone heads that stand upon the western slope of the mountain known as Rimeskull on Stormunder's eastern shore.

Third Stanza: The seven stone heads each represent one of the schools of Thassilonian magic, and by extension one of the seven runelords. Casting a spell of the correct school on the correct stone causes a key to manifest in that stone's mouth. This stanza directs the character to gather a key from each stone head in this manner, and then to ascend Rimeskull via an ancient set of stairs.

Fourth Stanza: After the characters ascend Rimeskull, they are directed to enter the cave and, in a chamber beyond, encounter a similar ring of seven stone faces arranged around the seven-pointed star of the Sihedron. Using the keys in these stones

THE SCRIBBLER'S RHYME

If magic bright is your desire,
To old Runeforge must you retire!
For only there does wizard's art
Receive its due and proper start.

On eastern shores of steaming mirror,
At end of day when dusk is nearer,
Where seven faces silent wait
Encircled guards at Runeforge gate.

Each stone the grace of seven lords,
One part of key each ruler hoards;
If offered spells and proper prayer;
Take seven keys and climb the stair.

On frozen mountain Xin awaits,
His regal voice the yawning gates
Keys turn twice in Sihedron—
Occulted Runeforge waits within.

And now you've come and joined the forge
Upon rare lore your mind can gorge—
And when you slough the mortal way
In Runeforge long your work shall stay.

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opens a portal to Runeforge, which exists in a pocket dimension of its own existence.

Fifth Stanza: This stanza closes out the rhyme, promising those who reach Runeforge a place of unbridled learning and raw discovery.

A1. Shrine Entrance

Thick sheets of webs clog the depths of this flight of stairs. Here and there, where the webs don't quite obscure the details, are signs that the stairs have recently been cleared of rubble—deep scratches along the walls and floors and the absence of any mold or mildew are apparent on the walls.

The webs in this stairwell were created by the Scribbler's *guards and wards* spell. The stairs themselves descend 50 feet from the abandoned Catacombs of Wrath above. They appear to end at a dead end, but a DC 30 Search check of the western wall here reveals a secret door. The door itself is also warded with an *alarm* spell cast by the Scribbler that, if triggered, silently alerts him.

The passageway beyond the door has collapsed, but a narrow tunnel has been cleared through into area **A2**.

A2. Antechamber

The walls, floor, and even the arched ceiling of this place are covered with writing, the words spiraling and trailing in the ancient language of Thassilon. Some of the phrases are immense, with words nearly three feet high, while others are written in tiny, spidery script. The medium for the writing varies as well—sometimes dark ink, sometimes blood, sometimes carved into the stone itself. Passageways to the north and east lead into fog-filled tunnels, and a pair of stone doors, their faces carved with an immense image of a three-eyed jackal's head, stand to the south. To the west, light flickers in what appears to be an immense cathedral.

Anyone moving around in this room is very likely to be noticed by the guardian of area **A6**, but that creature does not attack immediately upon sensing intruders here, giving the Scribbler time to make his first contact with the PCs. The scribbler asks them a few questions, likely while invisible or hiding in the fog to the north, then dimension doors to area **A9** to ruminate for a bit about their answers before seeking them out again elsewhere in the dungeon to ask more questions.

Anyone who can read Thassilonian can quickly deduce that the writing on the walls consists of prayers and scriptures to Lamashtu. A DC 20 Search check reveals four lines of what seems to be a larger poem that has nothing to do with Lamashtu. This is the first stanza of the Scribbler's rhyme.

A3. Birthing Pool

A low stone rim surrounds a shallow pool of water that seems to glow with a soft radiance. The walls around the room are carved with large runes, and the ceiling rises to a dome above.

The pool of water in the middle of the room looks pure but is foul-tasting. This is where those carrying the spawn of Lamashtu were taken to birth their deformed, monstrous children 10,000 years ago, and it was from this pool that Lamashtu returned the Scribbler to life as a divine guardian.

A4. Meditation Cell

Small dunes of rubble and dust lie on the floor of this room, disturbed as if by the passage of pacing feet. The walls and ceiling are densely crowded with scribblings and markings. An image of a three-eyed jackal glares from the wall to the east.

As in area **A2**, the walls here bear prayers to Lamashtu. In the center of the eastern wall, just under the image of the symbol of Lamashtu, is the second stanza of the Scribbler's rhyme.

A5. Collapsed Meditation Cell

This room has partially collapsed. Cracks radiate along the walls and ceiling here. An image of a three-eyed jackal glares from the eastern wall, one of the cracks running right across its snout.

This room might seem unstable, but it has done all the collapsing it will do for the time being—there's no real danger of further collapse unless someone attempts to clear the rubble along the southern wall.

A6. Shrine of Monsters and Madness (EL 13)

Although portions of this cathedral have collapsed, leaving mounds of rubble on the floor and crumbling walls, the chamber retains its sense of menacing awe. Four black stone pillars support the arched roof forty feet above, and on the floor between them the image of a three-eyed jackal seems to glower from striations in the stone itself. This image glows with a soft rusty light that illuminates the entire room from below. Alcoves to the north and south contain statues of a jackal-headed pregnant woman. Each clutches a pair of kukris crossed over her chest, and a reptilian tail winds down around her taloned feet. To the west, what once might have been a stone pulpit featuring other statues seems to have been partially buried under an ancient collapse. The walls of this room are densely decorated with hundreds of scribblings and sprawling runes.

Once the centerpiece of the Scribbler's Lamashtu cult, this shrine now stands empty and apparently deserted. The Scribbler has spent more time decorating the walls here with his prayers and invocations than elsewhere in the complex, and it shows in the more intricate and careful calligraphy he's used for his work. The third stanza of his rhyme is inscribed at the base of the middle statue of Lamashtu in the northern wall.

The Scribbler likely returns here to question the PCs, since if they lash out at him he can dimension door to safety while letting the glabrezu demon take care of them.

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Creature: When the Scribbler first woke from his 10,000 years of death as a divine guardian of Lamashtu's shrine, he knew, as soon as he discovered that leaving the shrine caused him pain, that he needed to build up guardians and minions who were not so hindered. His first attempt to summon such a minion was via a *planar ally* spell—to his great surprise and delight, Lamashtu answered his request for aid by sending a glabrezu named Yaenit-Ku. The Scribbler took this as a sign that Lamashtu's designs on the region are of great importance, and rightly so, but for now the Mother of Monsters has chosen to keep her plans for the Lost Coast a secret.

Yaenit-Ku **CR 13**

Male glabrezu demon (MM 43)

hp 174

TACTICS

Before Combat Yaenit-ku keeps a *mirror image* in effect at all times.

During Combat Yaenit-ku's first act in combat is to attempt to summon another glabrezu—he does not try to summon vrocks, since they're more closely allied with Lamashtu's enemy Pazuzu. On the first round of combat, he uses *reverse gravity* to strand characters who can't fly, then hits whoever looks like the strongest healer with a *power word stun*. He then engages the remaining PCs in melee, saving *confusion* for parties who seem to be working together too well. Yaenit-ku pursues foes throughout this complex, but does not follow them out of the shrine if they make it that far.

Morale Yaenit-ku is bound to this shrine for several more days and cannot leave—as a result, he fights to the death.

A7. Battleground

Blood is this cavern's decor; swaths of it lie spattered on the wall, and pools have congealed and begun to rot on the ground. Bits of flesh lie scattered as well—whatever happened here, it ended poorly for many.

When the guards sent by Sheriff Hemlock reached this shrine, the Scribbler hadn't yet begun to shore up his defenses. He was also more curious than enraged about these intruders, and invisibly watched their tentative exploration of the shrine with amusement. By the time the guards reached area **A6**, they'd realized the scope of their discovery and prepared to retreat and report to Hemlock. That was when the Scribbler struck.

A8. The Scribbler's Kennel (EL 11)

Three chambers that might once have been separate have become one here, joined by collapsed walls and the erosion of ages. Bloodstained fragments of chain shirts, shields, swords, and clothing lie strewn about this room haphazardly. The walls are decorated with countless scribblings written sloppily in blood.

The fourth stanza of the Scribbler's rhyme is inscribed on the northern wall of the southernmost chamber here. The fragments of armor and weapons are all that remain of the Sandpoint guards after the Scribbler fed them to his pack.

Creature: A pack of six hounds of Lamashtu, particularly bulky and feral shadow mastiffs conjured from the Mother of Monsters's court in the Abyss, dwell in these caves. As outsiders, they have no need to feed—their consumption of the guards was purely an act of malice. The baying and howling of this pack can be heard throughout the complex (as detailed above) but unless they hear or see intruders, they're content to remain here. Alone among the current denizens of the shrine, these hounds can pursue prey beyond these walls.

Hounds of Lamashtu (6) **CR 6**

Advanced elite shadow mastiff (MM 222)

NE Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +10, Spot +10

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13
(+2 Dexterity, +3 natural)

hp 57 each (6d8+30)

Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities shadow blend

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d8+7)

Special Attacks bay (DC 15), trip

TACTICS

During Combat The shadow mastiffs prefer to surround



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and attack the same foes rather than splitting into smaller groups. Note that these shadow mastiffs are of only animal intelligence (unlike standard shadow mastiffs, which can at least understand a few words) and only use relatively simple tactics as a result.

Morale The shadow mastiffs are relentless and fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +11

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Hide +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Spot +10, Survival +1 (+5 tracking by scent)

A9. Outer Sanctum (EL 7)

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this otherwise empty room are densely packed with writing, in many cases overlapping and tangled to near the point of illegibility. Four short lines stand out on the northern door, carved into the stone but otherwise alone on its face.

The lines decorating the door are the fifth stanza of the Scribbler's rhyme. This room was once a robing chamber for priests preparing for rituals in the shrine itself, but little remains today to denote that use—currently, the room serves no other purpose but as a trap.

Trap: Anyone who passes through the northern door into the foggy hallway beyond hears a whispering voice in his mind suggesting that Lamashtu's influence has tainted his friends, and that they are preparing to capture the victim to sacrifice him to Lamashtu. The suggestion encourages the character to do everything in his power to defend himself, hopefully by first finding a safe place where he can escape his supposed allies, and to fight back against them if they try to restrain him. The Scribbler placed this suggestion here via his *guards and wards* spell, hoping to sow discord in the ranks of an intruding group. If someone does manage to hide somewhere in the shrine alone, the Scribbler seeks him out as soon as possible to kill him.

The Scribbler's Suggestion **CR 7**

Type magical; **Search** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*suggestion*; Will DC 22 negates)

A10. The Scribbler's Lair

This entire chamber is warded by a *forbiddance* spell, placed here by the Scribbler. The *forbiddance* is keyed to chaotic evil and does not have a password to bypass its damage. A DC 22 Will save halves the damage.

The walls of this room are decorated with flowing script and runes. To the north slumps a bloody human body, its limbs apparently broken in a dozen places. A low table against the east wall is covered with vials of colored liquid, and sitting in an inkwell is a quill made from a peacock's feather.

This once served as a guard chamber, and the Scribbler chose it as his lair for its defensibility. As a divine guardian, he has no need for rest or food, and so he uses this room to meditate and as a safe place to retreat if necessary.

The scribbles on the wall of this room contain more than invocations to Lamashtu—they consist of notes the Scribbler has taken regarding the state of the world beyond, as reported to him by spirits and outsiders he's conjured, as well as *commune*, *divination*, and *speak with dead* spells cast on the dead body he keeps here. The notes impart a feeling of someone from out of time doing what he can to gather intelligence on a world that has moved on. Runeforge is mentioned several times—the Scribbler very much wants to send agents to the dungeon to gather supplies and raid it for magic, since he's grown convinced that the complex has long since been forgotten and abandoned.

The dead body is that of Jaren Basvear, a corporal in the Sandpoint militia and the leader of the group of guards Hemlock sent into these chambers. The Scribbler keeps his body fresh with *gentle repose* spells and has been using it as a source of information about the world above via *speak with dead*.

Treasure: The various bottles of ink and the quill are possessions the Scribbler valued in his previous life, returned to him (like his gear) by Lamashtu as a payment for serving her as this temple's guardian. There are 17 vials of ink in all, each worth 8 gp, but the real treasure here is the Scribbler's most valued possession: a *revelation quill* (see page 17).

PART TWO: SEEKING RUNEFORGE

If the PCs haven't already become intrigued by Runeforge by the end of "Fortress of the Stone Giants," when they discovered Mokmurian's cryptic note about the location, the riddle posed by the Scribbler's rhyme should do the trick. Of Runeforge itself, very little is written. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) or bardic knowledge check reveals that Runeforge was once a legendary place of learning and discovery for students of the arcane, but that its location has remained a mystery—Thassilonian scholars believe it to have been lost during the empire's fall.

More information about Runeforge can be divined via spells like *commune* or *contact other plane*—or alternatively, by researching the topic at the Thassilonian library under Jorgenfist. Knowledge (arcana) checks made with the library's resources at hand reveal more information, as follows (remember that the library adds a +20 bonus to Knowledge checks, and recruiting the clockwork librarian's aid adds a further +5 bonus):

Check DC	Result
33	Runeforge was created as a place where agents of the seven runelords could gather to study magic and develop new spells and magic items.
37	The runelords wove wards around Runeforge that barred entrance into the complex to any runelord or

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Revelation Quill (Minor Artifact)

Aura strong divination; **CL** 20th

Slot held; **Weight** 3 lb.

DESCRIPTION



The first *revelation quills* were created by the order of the Peacock Spirit. Since the fall of Thassilon, the method for creating them has been lost. The few *revelation quills* that remain today continue to function, drawing their revelations, it is said, from the Peacock Spirit itself. The quill is fashioned from a peacock's tail feather. Its nib is made of bone and when held in hand the quill seems strangely heavy. If placed in an empty vial or other glass container of similar size and left there for an hour, a *revelation quill* fills that container with ink. The ink created is of a random color 50% of the time—otherwise the ink is black.

While a *revelation quill* can certainly function as a standard writing implement, its true strength lies in its ability to answer questions you pose. Once per day, if you concentrate upon a specific future goal, event, or activity occurring within a week, the *revelation quill* takes over and writes out a short phrase in response, often in the form of a cryptic rhyme or omen, much in the same way the *divination* spell functions. Once per week, you may use the quill in the same way to cast *contact other plane* instead, asking up to 10 questions of the intelligence that guides the *revelation quill*.

his direct agents, in order to keep the research within free from sabotage at the hands of an enemy.

40 Those who joined Runeforge joined for life. The complex's constant renewal of air and a magical matrix sustained those within without the need to eat, drink, or even sleep.

43 The final project the runelords set Runeforge on was the development of ways the runelords could escape the imminent fall of their empire. Each faction developed a unique answer for its runelord, based upon the underlying principles of that faction's magical traditions.

The one bit of information missing from this is Runeforge's location. This was one of the most closely guarded secrets of the Thassilonian empire, and it's why the Scribbler's rhyme is so important. Divination spells can't reveal Runeforge's location due to the potent wards woven into its walls so long ago by the runelords. Once the PCs have recovered the Scribbler's masterpiece, these same divination spells can be incredibly helpful in deciphering its riddle, organizing its stanzas into the proper order, and verifying theories and interpretations of the poem.

The method by which the PCs travel to Lake Stormunder is left to them. The gazetteer of Varisia in *Pathfinder* #3 should prove invaluable if your PCs end up taking a long time reaching Lake Stormunder—there are plenty of adventure ideas there should your PCs become distracted along the way, but encounters in these regions are unfortunately beyond the scope of this adventure.

The Sihedron Circle (EL 15)

From the rocky eastern shoreline of Lake Stormunder, the ground rises into the craggy snow-dappled roots of Rimeskull, casting its long shadow over this area. Yet not all of the ground here is rugged and mountainous. Several hundred feet from the lake's edge, the land suddenly levels off to create a circular hill. Rocks and tenacious shrubs poke through the scattered clumps of snow here, but they are dwarfed by the ring of seven ten-foot-tall stone heads that circle the hill's edge, their faces angled inward at each other, mouths agape. To the east, the sheer mountainside of Rimeskull rises, icy and windblasted—two hundred feet above leers a carving of an ancient face, its gaping mouth forming a large cave entrance in the mountainside. A ten-foot-wide stairway of stone descends from this cave to a ledge only fifty feet to the east of the circle of stone faces.

Looming nearly 16,000 feet above Lake Stormunder at the westernmost tip of the Kodar Mountains, the mountain called Rimeskull gains its fearsome name from a vaguely skull-shaped formation near the mountain's peak, visible for many miles on a clear day. Few know the true story of Rimeskull, and even those sages who claim expertise in the history of Thassilon often have their facts wrong. A DC 40 Knowledge (history) check is enough to note that in Thassilon, the runelords often carved depictions of their visages upon mountaintops or towering statues that watched over their cities. Rimeskull's face, however, overlooked the site of Runeforge itself, and to symbolize that all seven runelords shared this territory, they agreed to mark the location with a carving of the face of their empire's first emperor, Xin. This monument did not receive the protective wardings most other Thassilonian monuments received, and over the last 10,000 years, the visage has eroded away to resemble little more than the vague skull shape that remains today.

The seven stone heads of the Sihedron Circle, on the other hand, have been warded with protective magic, staving off the effects of erosion as they march through the years, guarding the keys to Runeforge. Each night at sunset, the magic infusing these stone heads grows more potent, to the point where it can be observed with *detect magic* or *arcane sight*. In order to manifest a key, a character must subject the stone head to a spell effect of a school identical to the aura shed by the stone. *Detect magic* and *arcane sight* are the simplest methods of determining what schools of magic the stone heads radiate. Alternatively, a student of Thassilonian history who makes a DC 35 Knowledge (history) check can identify each of the stone heads, correlating them to the visages of the seven runelords (a character who has spent at least a week studying in the library under Jorgenfist receives a +15 circumstance bonus on this check), and thus which school of magic each head relates to.

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A spell effect need only be cast within 5 feet of a stone head in order for the head to absorb the spell; this occurs whether or not the caster intends the spell to be absorbed by the head. An absorbed spell does not create the desired effect—instead, the head that absorbed the spell glows with energy for a moment and the ground vibrates as a piercing trill emanates from the head. The glow and the sound fade completely after several seconds, at which point a gold key appears in its mouth. These keys are stored on the Ethereal Plane, and are simply brought back into phase with the Material Plane when the stone head is properly triggered. A character under the effects of *true seeing* can see a key sitting in a stone head's mouth while it is still ethereal, and an ethereal creature can easily take the key without repercussion—upon returning to the Material Plane, the key remains with him.

Casting spells of the appropriate school into a stone head or traveling to the Ethereal Plane aren't the only ways to secure keys. A DC 35 Use Magic Device check is good enough to trick the stone into thinking it has been triggered with an appropriate spell. It's a bit more difficult, but a DC 40 Disable Device check can also free the key and cause it to manifest inside the statue's mouth. And for those who simply lack all semblance of skill or magic, destroying a stone works as well.

The standing stones each weigh more than 40 tons and are 10 feet tall. They retain their wards against erosion, an effect that increases their hardness and hit points as well. Of course, each attack against a stone triggers its trap, and once a stone is destroyed, the resulting explosion of magical energy and light deals 20d6 points of electricity damage in a 60-foot burst. A DC 20 Reflex save halves this damage, but those who fail are also permanently blinded by this blast of searing magic. Note that this explosion could finish the job on nearby stone heads, creating a chain reaction of explosions. In any event, once a stone head is destroyed, the link to the Ethereal Plane vanishes and that head's key appears in the smoking crater its head once occupied.

The heads and the magic they are keyed to are as follows:

B1: Karzoug (transmutation)
B2: Krune (conjuration)
B3: Belimarius (abjuration)
B4: Sorshen (enchantment)
B5: Xanderghul (illusion)
B6: Alaznist (evocation)
B7: Zutha (necromancy)

Stone Runelord Head

hp 1,440
Hardness 16; **Break DC** 68

Creature: When the first of the stone heads is activated and its sonic pulse echoes through the ground and air, the current lord of Rimeskull takes notice. This is Arkrhyst—called Freezemaw by the Shoanti—an old white dragon who has lived on Rimeskull for 50 years. In his youth several centuries ago, Arkrhyst was a great and hated enemy of the Shoanti; his raids on the nomads of the Velashu Uplands and the western Storval Plateau were legendary, and many of those tribes still sing of these dark times, and of the countless heroes who sought out his home on Rimeskull to defeat him. None accomplished this goal, but as Arkrhyst grew older, his urge to raid grew less. Content now with the reputation he earned, he sleeps for years at a time on his considerable store of treasure, dreaming of his youthful rampages.

A DC 25 Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check is enough for a character to recall stories of Arkrhyst's raids on the Shoanti, and that 200 years ago, the dragon's raids ceased. Many thought he had been slain, but no sign of his supposedly vast treasure ever appeared—wiser scholars of things draconic believe that Arkrhyst has simply been sleeping for many, many years.

After shaking the sleep from his eyes, Arkrhyst clambers up from his cave and spies the PCs below. Allow the PCs Spot checks to notice him—but in addition to the modifier for the 200-foot distance (+20 to his Hide check), cover from the cave entrance gives him a further +8 bonus to his Hide check against anyone observing from below.

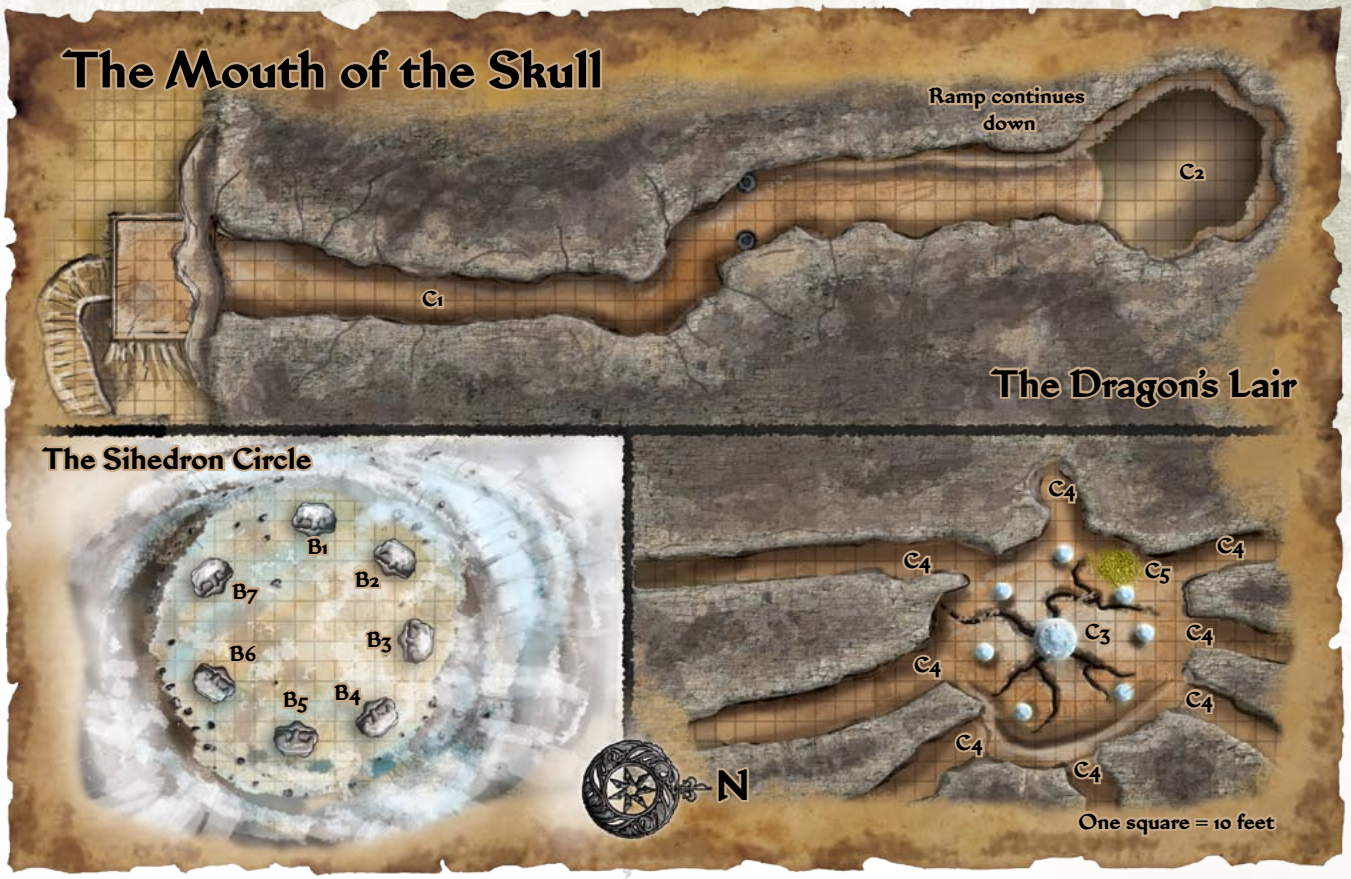
Arkrhyst CR 15

Male old white dragon (MM 77)
CE Huge dragon (cold)
Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +28, Spot +28
Aura frightful presence (240 ft., Will DC 23 resists)



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DEFENSE

AC 39, touch 8, flat-footed 31
(+4 armor, +23 natural, +4 shield, –2 size)
hp 276 (24d12+120)
Fort +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15
DR 10/magic; **Immune** cold, paralysis, sleep; **Resist** fire 10; **SR** 21
Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Spd 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.
Melee bite +34 (3d8+11/19–20) and
2 claws +31 (2d6+5) and
2 wings +31 (1d8+5) and
tail slap +31 (2d6+16)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone; 8d6 cold; Reflex DC 29 half), crush (2d8+13, Reflex DC 27 avoids)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
3/day—*fog cloud*, *freezing fog* (DC 16), *gust of wind*
Spells Known (CL 5th, +22 ranged touch)
2nd (4/day)—*bull's strength*, *resist energy*
1st (7/day)—*mage armor*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *daze* (DC 11), *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat As soon as Arkhryst sees the PCs approach, he casts *resist energy (fire)*, *bull's strength*, *mage armor*, *protection from good*, and *shield*. The effects of these spells are included in his stats.
During Combat Arkhryst flies low over PCs (or just above the standing stones) and uses his breath weapon, at the same time relying on his frightful presence to weaken his enemies' morale. If his opponents scatter, he singles a random opponent out in between rounds when he can breathe and makes either a flyby tail slap or a bite so that he can snatch an opponent, carry him aloft, breathe on him, and drop him from at least 200 feet up onto the rocks below. If confronted with flying foes, Arkhryst uses *gust of wind* to send smaller foes reeling and retreats to his cave above if he finds that their greater mobility is causing him too much trouble.
Morale If Arkhryst is reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, he returns to his mountain lair in Rimeskull to heal and rethink his tactics based on the combat abilities displayed by his enemies.

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12
Base Atk +24; **Grp** +43
Feats Ability Focus (breath weapon), Cleave, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite)
Skills Hide +19, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (geography) +19, Knowledge (history) +19, Listen +28, Move Silently +27, Spot +28, Swim +46
Languages Draconic, Giant
SQ icewalking

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Xin's Stairway (EL 11)

A massive stairway that looks like it must have been built by giants and taken years, if not decades, to complete is chiseled out of the side of the mountain. A twenty-foot-wide and thirty-foot-tall stone arch frames the first steps, while the final steps lead directly up to a carving of an ancient face, its open mouth a cave entrance. The familiar seven-pointed star is etched deeply into its surface, prominently positioned at the highest section of the arch. Bones lie in iced-over heaps along the visible areas of the stairway.

Each step is approximately a foot and a half high and 3 feet deep, with an average width of 20 feet. The stairway winds back and forth, rising up 200 feet to the entrance to the cavern above. Icy bones litter the long stairway, cast-off remains of the meals consumed by the white dragon lurking near the top of the mountain over the hundreds of years since it began its stewardship. For the most part, the skeletal debris are frozen to the steps, the bones and random equipment of ancient passersby brittle from ages of frost and chill wind.

The landing is approximately 60 feet wide and 50 feet long from the top of the steps to the cave mouth. The strong wind blowing across the mountain at these heights imposes a –2 penalty on ranged attacks and Listen checks. Small or smaller creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude save each round while on the landing or be knocked down. If they are flying, failure results in being blown 1d6×10 feet in a random direction. The surface of the landing is coated in places by a thin layer of rime, but this does not affect movement.

Beyond the stairway itself is a small cave network that contains the entrance to Runeforge and serves as the dragon's lair.

Creatures: A pair of ancient guardians still watches over the stairs leading up to the cave entrance. Anyone who climbs these stairs immediately attracts their attention. These guardians are two greater earth elementals, bound to the stairs by ancient magic. The elementals know to allow anyone openly wearing a *Sihedron medallion* (see *Pathfinder* #1) free passage, but all other intruders are attacked on sight.

Greater Earth Elemental (2) — CR 9

hp 199 (MM 97)

TACTICS

During Combat Each of the elementals uses Awesome Blow and Improved Bull Rush to knock opponents back from the cave mouth. Weapons that cause them harm are targeted for Improved Sunder attacks. With each attack, the elementals use Power Attack (5 points). If possible, the elementals push opponents off the landing, either over the stone railing (this gives PCs a +2 on their opposed rolls) or down the steps. PCs pushed down the steep stairs take an additional 1d6 points of damage and the distance pushed might send them plummeting over the edge—a fall of up to 200 feet, depending on how high up the stairs the victim was.

Morale The earth elementals fight to the death.

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C1. Deadly Slide (EL 12)

Two twelve-foot-tall statues flank the large tunnel at this point. The stone sentinels each hold one hand upraised as if to ward away intruders, clutching a heavy sword with the other.

The statue on the west side of the tunnel is a *permanent image* (CL 20th, Will DC 19 to disbelieve) that marks the start of an invisible ledge that can be used to safely bypass the dangerous slope and descend into the cavern beyond. Although the ledge is invisible, bits of dust and snow and rubble on its length make it easier to notice with a DC 25 Spot check. The slope itself is icy, and any attempt to proceed further to the east on it requires a DC 15 Balance check. Failure by 5 or more indicates a fall, sending the victim sliding down to the east at a speed equal to his land speed and eventually into the open gulf in area **C2**.

Development: If Arkrhyst flees to his lair to escape the battle outside, he casts *freezing fog* in the tunnel at this point, then *alarm* on the eastern edge of the fog before retreating further into his lair.

C2. The Ice Falls

The slope ends at the edge of a gaping chasm of darkness. Huge icicles hang from the ceiling and coils of mist rise up from below.

The hidden ledge that started at area **C1** becomes a ramp winding around the walls of this chasm, providing a safe route down into area **C3** below. The gulf itself is 300 feet deep, eventually opening into area **C3**. A character sliding down the ramp from area **C1** can make a single DC 20 Reflex save to grab onto the edge of the gulf before falling in.

C3. Frozen Cathedral

The walls of this cavern glitter and sparkle with sheets of ice. Seven twenty-foot-tall pillars, their sides encrusted with ice and engraved with ancient glyphs and runes, surround an eighth pillar twice the size that rises to a needle-like point. Huge tunnels in the walls exit the central cavern, winding deeper into the mountain. Yet perhaps the most notable feature is the sparkling mound of coins, works of art, gemstones, jewelry, weapons, armor, and other things poking up from the pile that occupies the northwestern section of the cavern.

This cavern was once the central hub for the original construction of Runeforge, before the wardens completed the last ritual and whisked the complex and much of the surrounding stone away into its own demiplane. All they left behind were the stone pillars—the entrance into Runeforge. Of course, for the last several centuries, the chamber has also served as Arkrhyst's lair.

The seven pillars surrounding the central pillar are each marked with hundreds of Thassilonian runes—arcane formulae describing the basic tenets of one of the seven Thassilonian schools of magic. The seven pillars form the points of a huge Sihedron, and a DC 20 Search of any of these seven reveals a small keyhole hidden four feet off the ground on each pillar, facing the central monolith. If the proper key from the Sihedron Circle outside is placed in the proper pillar's keyhole and then turned in two complete revolutions (the direction doesn't matter), the pillar begins to hum and glow softly. Once the pillar is glowing its key vanishes (returning to the Ethereal Plane at a point corresponding to the correct face in the Sihedron Circle outside). The pillar continues to glow for an hour before it fades, at which point the key must be retrieved from its statue again to reactivate it.

If all seven pillars are active at the same time (the order of activation does not matter), the central pillar begins to glow and ripple with a vortex of light that combines all seven of the surrounding colors. At the pillar's base, the vortex whirls in on itself like a vertically aligned whirlpool, opening into a 7-foot-wide circular portal through which can be faintly seen a long tunnel. Anyone who steps through this portal steps into Runeforge.

Development: If Arkrhyst retreats to his lair after a fight with the PCs, he knows they're probably not far behind. He spends several rounds drinking potions to heal his wounds. When his *alarm* in area **C1** is triggered, he abandons his treasure and retreats down one of the side tunnels to hide and watch. He's barely able to restrain his rage if he sees the PCs looting his treasure, but realizes that it's better to wait for now, recover from his wounds, and ambush the PCs later to regain his hoard. If he sees the PCs activate the portal to Runeforge and enter, he waits for several minutes before following them inside.

C4. Tunnels

These large interconnected tunnels once led to smaller chambers chiseled out of the rock before the Runeforge was whisked away into its own demiplane. The chambers beyond are little more than vast, empty caverns that once held the individual Runeforge complexes. Arkrhyst's presence in area **C3** has kept other creatures from moving into these empty caverns.

Development: If the PCs discover Arkrhyst hiding in one of these caves, the dragon realizes he's cornered and fights to the death to protect his lair.

C5. Dragon Hoard

Treasure: This massive pile of treasure consists of 39,500 cp, 9,410 sp, 3,500 gp, and 250 pp. Mixed in with the coins are tapestries, small items of furniture made of precious woods, candelabra, six everburning torches, and several decorative boxes spilling pieces of jewelry worth an additional 16,000 gp in all. Buried in the coins is a quiver of 14 masterwork arrows and two *greater dragon slaying arrows*, a *belt of giant strength* +4, a teak box holding a felt cushion with six round depressions each containing a thunderstone, an ivory set of *lesser bracers of archery*, a darkwood buckler, a *chime of opening* (5 charges), a *cloak of resistance* +3, a *flametongue*, a masterwork suit of full plate decorated with onyx ravens perched on the shoulders (each raven is worth 200 gp), a suit of +3 *half-plate* with a wolf motif, 6 vials of frozen holy water, a *pearl of power* (1st-level

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spell), 17 *potions of cure light wounds*, 6 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*, 2 *potions of resist energy 20 (cold)*, 2 Small *+1 mithral shirts*, a *scroll of globe of invulnerability*, a *scroll of heal*, a *scroll of remove blindness/deafness*, a *wand of bear's endurance* (38 charges), a *wand of cure light wounds* (46 charges), and a *+1 adamantine warhammer*.

Development: If Arkrhyst fled here, he drinks potions until his hit points are restored. Depending on his wounds, this might leave only a few or even no healing potions in his hoard when the PCs arrive.

PART THREE: RUNEFORGE

Runeforge is constructed as a central hub surrounded by seven wings, each of which is associated with one of the seven Thassilonian schools of magic. Of course, in the 10,000 years Runeforge has been cut off from the outside world, the keepers and denizens of these wings have descended further into the sins associated with those schools of magic. Runeforge is no longer a place of learning, but a battleground where petty warlords wage an eternal battle to keep and control their own domains while attempting to destroy the other six. Alliances and feuds shift and evolve over the centuries, and while two of the seven have fallen completely into ruin (envy and sloth), the other five persist. Yet hidden in these chambers is a trove of lore and magic, including the key to Karzoug's defeat.

The approach from the portal is along a 10-foot-wide stone tunnel. When the portal closes, this tunnel becomes a dead end, with nothing to indicate an exit—the portal cannot be opened from this side. In order to escape, the PCs need to rely on their own magic (*plane shift* and *gate* both work, in this case, as do spells like *dismissal* or *banishment*) or find one of the deactivated return portals in Runeforge, reactivate it, and use it to return to Varisia.

Runeforge Features

Runeforge was created on the Material Plane, yet it does not actually exist there—the complex is a self-contained demiplane. Nonetheless, Runeforge follows many of the "rules" of the Material Plane as if the complex were still a part of it. Gravity works the same, time passes at the same rate, and there are no dominant planar traits. You cannot reach Runeforge via teleportation, nor can you escape it in that way. There are no wards against planar travel to and from Runeforge, but the tuning fork material component required to travel here using *plane shift* is unknown outside of its walls.

Attempts to move through the surrounding stone, either by magic or legitimate tunneling, reveal that Runeforge is contained in a void of dangerous entropy. The sphere of stone that holds Runeforge has a radius (from the center of area **D**) of a mile. Beyond is a maelstrom of nothingness, a black void that extends forever and contains nothing but air. A creature incapable of flight falls into the void and continues falling forever. Teleportation can save a PC from this fate as long as he teleports back into Runeforge.

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Magically Treated Stonework: The walls, floors, and ceilings of Runeforge are made of stone that has been magically treated (hardness 16, 1,080 hp per 3 feet, Break DC 70, Climb DC 20).

Sustenance: Runeforge sustains those within its walls constantly, keeping them nourished and reviving the body and mind. No creature needs to eat, drink, or sleep in Runeforge, except for pleasure. Likewise, air is constantly refreshed in Runeforge (with the exception of the air in the Festering Maze)—any spell or effect that creates tainted air (such as *stinking cloud* or a ghast's stench) still functions normally, but the air supply in the complex never runs out despite the fact that the dungeon is entirely enclosed.

No Escape: Visitors to Runeforge today can leave the demiplane by using spells like *plane shift* or even by being subjected to the effects of spells like *holy word* or the violet color of a *prismatic ray* spell. All of the denizens encountered within Runeforge, however, have dwelt so long in this curious realm that they cannot escape via these methods—Runeforge holds them tight. Spells like teleport or *ethereal jaunt* function, and even something like *shadow walk* works, provided at the spell's end the subjects return to Runeforge. *Astral projection* allows an inhabitant to explore beyond Runeforge's boundaries, but otherwise a denizen of Runeforge can only escape via *gate* or a freestanding portal (like the one in area **K6**).

D. The Runeforge

This domed chamber is easily a hundred feet across. A large pool of bubbling prismatic liquid occupies the center of a raised dais in the center of the chamber. The spiky flanges of the seven-pointed Sihedron are engraved into the marble floor. Each tip of the enormous rune points at a twenty-five-foot-tall statue facing the pool with its back approximately ten feet from the wall behind it. The two statues nearest the entrance partially conceal arched openings in the wall directly behind them. Each statue depicts a different figure, but all are imperious and finely detailed.

This is the central hub of Runeforge and the location of its namesake—the *runeforge pool*. The inhabitants of Runeforge used the *runeforge pool* as a method to communicate with the runelords, but the pool's primary use was to temper newly created magic items. With the *runeforge pool*, the wizards could create magic items much more efficiently and rapidly.

The seven statues surrounding the pool are of the seven runelords. When used to contact a runelord, the waters of the *runeforge pool* flowed out to anoint the appropriate statue, which could then animate and speak to those gathered within the room. The statues themselves are made of the same magically enhanced stone as Runeforge's walls, and if destroyed are reformed 24 hours later by the *runeforge pool*.

When Mokmurian woke Karzoug several years ago, the waters of this pool reacted by flaring and bubbling with greater vitality, alerting the occupants of Runeforge that something was afoot. After spending the last several thousand years in growing states of languishing doldrums, the denizens have been revitalized and began carrying out schemes and plots hundreds of years in the making in anticipation of what they believe to be Runeforge's second coming. The scheming began in earnest when the masters of the Abjurant Halls of Envy attempted to claim control of the *runeforge pool*, an act that mobilized the coordinated retaliation of the other surviving factions. This resulted in the complete eradication and collapse of the Abjurant Halls. The short-lived truce was immediately broken thereafter, and since then these powerful minions have focused on bolstering their defenses and increasing their power.

The bubbling, prismatic waters of the *runeforge pool* are alternatingly painfully hot and freezing cold to the touch, yet not enough to damage anyone who touches them. Additionally, those

RUNELORD ROLE-CALL

Descriptions of the seven statues in area **D** are as follows, with Karzoug being the northernmost and the others following in clockwise manner.

Karzoug: A towering man with gems set in his forehead and hands, dressed in robes and wielding a burning glaive.

Krune: A short smiling man with a hooked nose and beady eyes, dressed in robes and wielding a spear.

Belimarius: A heavyset woman with a sneering visage and an imperious stance, dressed in a flowing dress and wielding a halberd.

Sorshen: A voluptuous woman with a seductive look, large eyes, and long flowing hair; this statue is nude and wields a double-headed guisarme.

Xanderghul: A strikingly handsome man with a close-cropped beard and a charming expression, dressed in extravagant clothes and wielding a lucerne hammer.

Alaznist: A gothic beauty with wild hair and a somewhat insane expression, this woman wears a long flowing dress and wields a thorny ranseur.

Zutha: An obese man, his flesh rotten in places so that the bones show through, wearing a ragged robe and wielding a scythe.

THE FREEZEMAW FACTOR

It's possible that Arkrhyst Freezemaw escapes from the PCs before they enter Runeforge. In this case, the white dragon, intrigued by the portal the PCs opened in his lair and burning with hatred and a need for revenge against them, follows the PCs into Runeforge. In this event, you can use Freezemaw as a fly in the ointment. Most of the tunnels in Runeforge are wide enough that he can navigate them by squeezing, and if the dragon explores the chambers, chances are good that he'll meet up one of the factions in Runeforge before the PCs do. You can have the dragon ally with this faction, giving one of the groups an additional powerful ally. Alternately, you can have Arkrhyst stalk the PCs and spring him when they're recovering from a particularly harrowing battle. You can even save Arkrhyst for the final battle when the PCs trigger the statue of Karzoug in area D (see page 54). Use him as you will to inflict an extra dose of draconic mayhem on your group.

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SINNERS IN RUNEFORGE

In addition to being able to ignore some effects and being more susceptible to others, sinners in Runeforge find that in an associated wing of the dungeon they feel more welcome and inspired. Unfortunately, that also means that in two other wings, they feel unwanted and oppressed. Consult the illustration on page 56 to determine each PC's opposition sins.

In an allied wing (such as the Vault of Greed for a greedy character), that character gains a +1 bonus on all skill checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. These bonuses are included in any NPCs encountered in that area.

In an opposition wing (such as the Iron Cages of Lust or the Shimmering Veil for a greedy character), that character gains a –2 penalty on all skill checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. As written, no NPCs are encountered in opposition wings in this adventure, but in the case one moves (such as Delvahine pursuing foes from the Iron Cages of Lust into the Ravenous Crypts), don't forget to apply these penalties to that NPC as well.

who touch the waters receive a tangled collage of memories and visions of events yet to come. All five senses are assaulted by the magical potential of the pool, and each round a person remains in contact with the waters he must make a DC 20 Will save or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds. The waters of the pool have further uses, primarily in the creation of magic items, but these details are presented in Part Eleven of this adventure.

Reaching the Seven Wings

The seven wings of Runeforge radiate out from the central chamber in the same orientation as the Sihedron. These tunnels are magical creations, built to ease the passage of those specialized in the appropriate form of magic and hinder passage for all other intruders.

A wizard specialized in the same school of magic who steps into one of the seven exits from area **D** immediately finds himself standing in the first encounter area of that wing. All other creatures who enter these hallways perceive instead an endless hallway traveling off into the horizon. Every round of moving along this hallway in a direction away from the central chamber, a traveler must make a DC 20 Will save (wizards who have this wing's school of magic as a prohibited school take a –4 penalty on this saving throw). Failure indicates that the passageway continues unchanged, but on a successful save, that character finds himself within the first encounter area of the wing he seeks.

From inside each wing, the passageway that connects to area **D** seems short—only a few dozen feet at most. Likewise, no matter how far someone feels they've traveled into a hallway (after failing multiple Will saves), the return to area **D** is always similarly short.

Sin Triggers

Before your players pass beyond the Runeforge hub into the surrounding wings, take a few moments to jot down some notes about each player character's sins on a piece of paper. Several traps, effects, and creatures in Runeforge have the uncanny ability to scent sin on an intruder, and in so doing recognize such intruders as possible allies. Originally, these wards were designed to detect a character's powers in each school of magic, so that, for example, someone skilled in evocation magic would feel welcome and safe in that area whereas others would find the going difficult.

Over the course of the campaign, you've had a chance to get to know your PCs quite well. If you've been keeping track of "sin points" since the start (see the Sin and the PC sidebar on page 19 of *Pathfinder* #2), determining what each PC's strongest sin is should be simple. On your piece of paper, jot down the name of each PC and, next to his name, record which of the seven deadly sins that character's personality most strongly typifies. These characters gain certain bonuses and penalties while in specific wings of Runeforge. In addition, certain traps don't affect those of allied sins, and some of the creatures herein are likely to react more favorably to those they believe are allies.

It's certainly likely you have characters who aren't sinners, or who are honestly virtuous. In either of these events, simply leave their sins blank—these characters find that while there isn't a wing of Runeforge where they feel particularly welcome, neither do they suffer penalties for being in a wing that opposes their sin.

PART FOUR: THE ABJURANT HALLS

The majority of this area has been destroyed, ruined during a relatively recent war when the Wardens of Envy attempted to seize control of the newly awakened *runeforge pool*. The hallway leading to these mostly collapsed chambers no longer bears the distance distortion effect and can be navigated with ease by anyone. The surviving walls of this complex are decorated with murals, and where they are not horribly scorched and soot stained, they reveal scenes of bejeweled wizards in blue-grey robes adorned with ancient runes quelling magical energy, countering the spells of rival wizards, and combining their powers to tame great scaled dragons and giants.

A PC who studies the murals may make a DC 20 Spellcraft check to identify the somatic gestures of the robed wizards depicted in the murals as components of powerful abjuration spells. If the PCs do not recognize the rune of Envy depicted in the murals, they may make a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or bardic knowledge check to identify it.

The surviving tunnels and chambers here are of hewn stone. Those portions of the complex that have collapsed have been absorbed and recycled into the stone surrounding the demiplane—attempts to dig out the collapsed rooms are destined to fail, as these rooms no longer exist.

E1. A Warning Message

The approach of a non-envious character triggers a permanent *magic mouth* spell when entering this square from the direction of area **D**, whether flying or on foot. If the spell is triggered, read or paraphrase the following.

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LOOTING SPELLBOOKS

Throughout the various branches of Runeforge, the PCs are destined to encounter a lot of wizards, most of whom are specialists. That equates to a lot of spellbooks. Cataloging the contents of each spellbook would simply take up too much space. All spellbooks found in Runeforge are left up to you to customize as you see fit. Two simple solutions are to just assume that the spellbooks contain all their authors' prepared spells plus 1d4 additional spells per level, or to assume that the spellbooks have all of the spells from the core rules, excepting those from prohibited schools. The best solution is to take some time to customize them—this gives you the opportunity to provide your players with exactly the spells you want them to have and add some of the new spells detailed in the Magic of Thassilon article that begins on page 56.

—Stephen S. Greer

WHAT'S WITH THIS TRAP?

The disjunction pulse is one of those traps that will really get under the skin of your players. It'll cause moans and looks of despair all around the table. That's because nothing upsets players more than losing their cool magic items. Getting incinerated by a red dragon? Yeah, it happens. Dismembered by a troll? Sure. But take away their magic stuff? Now, that's just heinous and cruel! (Now you understand why the other inhabitants of Runeforge annihilated these bastards!) Because of this, this trap is pretty obvious to anyone looking into the room—chances of it surprising a group are pretty slim. Still, handle this one with care!

—Stephen S. Greer

A voice booms out a resounding command: "Stop!" The source is a large disembodied human mouth stretched across the ceiling of this section of the tunnel. It continues, "These are the Abjurant Halls of Eager Striving. Know that your powers will be crushed and you shall die! You are not worthy!"

The Abjurant Lords of Envy despised anyone who had even a hint of personal power that might be construed as a threat to their own. They strived to crush all such beings with powerful abjurations and *disjoining* spells if they could not wrest their enemy's power from them. Unsurprisingly, these practices earned them the joint ire of the rest of Runeforge.

E2. The Chamber of Vengeful Disjoining (EL 10)

A wide staircase of stone descends into a large, partially caved-in chamber. The murals and decorative bas-reliefs on the walls have been blasted and fractured from what must have been a titanic war of magic. Sooty humanoid bones are scattered here and there, and flames sporadically flicker along the walls and floor as if the room still resonates with the power unleashed here. Electrical discharges spark from a silver rod protruding from the floor in the center of the room—it almost looks like the metal rod has fused with the stone of the floor.

Trap: The silver rod was one of the standard weapons carried by the Abjurant Lords of Envy: a *rod of cancellation*. Unfortunately, this *rod of cancellation* is badly damaged, and the other denizens of Runeforge have learned to avoid this room as a result. The powerful magic stored within it and the energy resonating in this chamber made it unstable and beyond repair. Every five minutes, the rod generates a pulse of abjuration energy. This pulse is preceded for one round by humming and angry crackling, popping sounds. When the stored energy is released, a *mage's disjunction* bursts in the room. This disjunction blast radiates from the malfunctioning rod and has no effect upon the surrounding magical qualities of Runeforge itself.

When the PCs first visit this room, the rod is 1d10 rounds away from releasing a disjunction pulse. If the malfunctioning rod is disarmed, the magic fades away from the trap harmlessly, but if the Disable Device check fails by 5 or more, it triggers its pulse early. Likewise, the rod triggers a pulse every time it is roughly jostled or targeted by a spell or other effect. *Dispel magic* can render it inert for 1d4 rounds if the roll is successful, otherwise the attempt causes a disjunction pulse. If the trap is triggered before it's had time to store a charge, all saving throws made to resist it gain a +4 bonus.

DISJUNCTION PULSE **CR 10**

Type magical; **Search** DC 15; **Disable Device** DC 34

AC 7 (–5 Dexterity, –2 object, +4 Size)

hp 30; **Hardness** 10; **Break** DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger timed and touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*mage's disjunction*, 17th-level wizard, DC 23 Will save negates); multiple targets (all magic items or spell effects in a 40-ft. radius)

E3. The Ethillion Pool

The entrance to this room may only be found with a DC 30 Search check after removing the rubble in front of it. The 10-foot by 10-foot section in front of the secret door is loose enough to be cleared. The collapsed stonework behind it doesn't budge. Pushing a certain section of the secret door causes it to slide inward and to the left into a recess in the wall.

Decorative lanterns illuminate this large hidden room. Several padded benches line the walls while a tiled path in the granite flagstones leads from the secret door to three steps leading down to a mirrored surface.

The circular depression forms a ring of steps descending to what appears to be a large pool filled with quicksilver. This metallic liquid is a rare substance invented by the Abjurant Lords—they called it ethillion. When properly tended (a process that requires several skilled abjurers and lots of time), ethillion leeches away magic from any object it contacts, storing that magic for harvesting at a later date to defer the XP cost of creating magic items.

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Ethillion is also one of the components required to create a *runeforged weapon* in the *runeforge pool*—see Part Eleven for more details.

Treasure: The tiny amount of ethillion remaining in the pool can be a potent boon to the PCs. Enough doses of ethillion remain in the pool to fill a dozen flasks—ethillion can be safely transported in anything that can transport water. A single flask of ethillion contains the equivalent of 100 XP—a character who drinks a flask of the stuff can then use that XP to defer the cost of creating magic items or casting powerful spells. These XP do not increase a character's actual XP total, but they do persist until they are used. Multiple doses of ethillion stack.

Alternatively, a character can use a flask of ethillion as an additional material component for any abjuration spell. Doing so causes that spell to resolve at a caster level 2 higher than the user's actual caster level.

Since the remaining ethillion in this pool has already been "charged," it no longer possesses the capability to drain magic from items it contacts. The secret of creating ethillion died with the Abjurant Lords, but if it could be rediscovered, uncharged ethillion drains magic from an item placed in it over the course of 24 hours. Up until this time passes, an item removed from contact quickly recovers. An item allowed to be drained becomes nonmagical, and 1/10th of the XP used to craft the item becomes stored in the ethillion for later use.

PART FIVE: THE RAVENOUS CRYPTS

This section of Runeforge was commissioned by Runelord Zutha, ruler of ancient Gastash, to serve a dual role. As with the other wings, these crypts were a place where his most gifted necromancers could study and perfect their art. Yet it also served another role as one of Gastash's finest catacombs, where nobles of his domain could be interred upon their death (pending proper payment, of course). What was left unsaid but implied was that the bodies of Gastash's greatest nobles then became the raw materials for expanding the nation's magical power. In essence, these nobles paid for the opportunity to become necromancy supplies.

Yet in the thousands of years since the fall of Thassilon, the necromancers of the Ravenous Crypts ran into a problem—without a constant inflow of new bodies, they quickly ran out of fresh dead to work upon. The necromancers initially turned to the other wings, assaulting them and attempting to harvest other students for necromantic supplies, but the other wings proved too well-defended. In the end, the necromancers succumbed to their own sin of gluttony and effectively became cannibals, turning on each other for raw materials. It didn't take long for one necromancer to win this war—this was the lich Kazaven. Over the past several thousand years, Kazaven's advances in necromancy have slowed to a near standstill and the crypts have long since emptied of the dead. His greatest necromantic triumphs dwell in the crypts now, but Kazaven himself spiraled into introspective oblivion.

That changed with the wakening of the *runeforge well*. After taking part in the destruction of the Abjurant Halls, Kazaven managed to harvest a fresh supply of dead and is in the process of revitalizing his experiments. He spends all of his time in his laboratory, but the crypts beyond are far from safe.

The Ravenous Crypt is exquisitely crafted. Arches are elaborately carved with stunning artistic patterns. Ceilings are 10 feet high in corridors, all of which are adorned with decorative moldings inlaid with silver angels. Chambers are usually arched or domed to a height of 20 feet and covered with beautiful frescoes and mosaics depicting sleeping men and women tended by cherubim and soothed by angelic singers and musicians. The floors are covered in smooth, fitted flagstones with inlaid ceramic tiles in various decorative patterns. There are numerous secret doors hidden throughout the dungeon, each of which can be located with a DC 30 Search check. Secret doors are made of magically treated marble, but the rest of the catacomb doors are made of iron.

The extent of the Ravenous Crypts are under the effects of a permanent *desecrate* effect (CL 20th); all undead within the crypts were created here, and thus all gain a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws, and have +1 hp per HD. These bonuses are included in their stat blocks. This aura is provided by hundreds of wraiths that have been bound into the walls, ceiling, and floor of the crypts. All stone surfaces in the crypts are cold to the touch as a result. Whenever any effect damages or breaches the stone walls of these crypts (such as *meld into stone*, *passwall*, *transmute rock to mud*, or simple damage applied directly to a wall in an attempt to breach it), 1d6 wraiths are released into the area and immediately attack any living creatures they sense.

Magically Treated Secret Tomb Door

hp 120; **Hardness** 16
Search DC 30, **Break** DC 48

Iron Door

hp 60; **Hardness** 10
Break DC 28; **Open Lock** DC 30

Wraith CR 5

hp 32 (MM 258)

Unkeyed Crypts

Most of the crypts in this wing are empty, their dead long since taken away by Kazaven for experimentation. Some of these rooms contain a single decorative (but empty) sarcophagus. Others contain several empty burial niches in the walls, or even mausoleum-style biers with sealed doors enclosing the emptiness inside. Chamber upon chamber of empty crypts and floors heaped with dust give the complex an eerie feeling of loss and despair.

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F1. Crypts of the Builders (EL 12)

The ceiling of this circular domed chamber rises to a height of thirty feet. The walls are decorated with dozens of grinning skulls, each gripping what appear to be bits of flesh in their teeth. A flight of steps leads up via a corridor in the far wall.

Each of the carved skulls is in fact a secret door that hides a narrow burial bier—all are empty save for a few silk funeral shrouds and scented herbs, preserved by Runeforge for eternity. These chambers once contained the bodies of the laborers and architects responsible for the creation of these crypts. When their jobs were completed, the laborers were sealed alive into these biers, while the architects were animated as mummies and set to guard the entrance. These mummies remain to this day.

Creatures: The six Thassilonian mummies that stand eternal guard in this room are desiccated and dried monsters clad in ancient chainmail and strips of ragged leather. Their undead flesh is black and shiny, and shiny black beetles clatter over (and in places through holes in) their frames—these beetles are a physical manifestation of these mummies' more potent despair auras, constantly dropping off and turning to dust and being reborn in the desiccated flesh, but are themselves harmless. The mummies rise up to attack most intruders on sight, but allow those who are gluttonous free passage.

One of these mummies bears a permanent *telepathic bond* with Kazaven and immediately notifies the lich if intruders enter the room, going as far as to provide the lich up-to-the-second reports on the PCs' tactics and apparent weaknesses. In this manner, the lich should have plenty of time to prepare for the PCs' arrival.

Thassilonian Mummy (6) **CR 7**

Elite advanced mummy (MM 190)
LE Medium undead
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +19, Spot +19
Aura despair (line of sight, DC 21 resists)

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 26
(+6 armor, +2 Dexterity, +10 natural)
hp 90 (12d12+12)
Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13
DR 5/—; **Immune** undead traits
Weakness vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.
Melee slam +19 (1d8+16 plus mummy rot)
Special Attacks mummy rot (DC 19 resists)

TACTICS

During Combat These mummies focus their wrath on any envious or lustful characters in the group. They do not attack gluttonous characters unless such characters attack them first.
Morale The mummies fight until destroyed, pursuing foes throughout the crypts but not back into the Runeforge hub.

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +16
Feats Ability Focus (despair), Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam)
Skills Listen +19, Spot +19
Languages Thassilonian
Gear *+1 chainmail*, gem-encrusted torque worth 600 gp

F2. The House Patriarchs

Seven shallow alcoves spaced around the room contain heavy iron doors with decorative designs engraved into their surfaces. At the center of the chamber, six life-sized human statues depict men and women in various states of aristocratic attire. Each faces one of the doors—only the southernmost door does not have an attendant statue. One holds aloft a sprig of grapes, another clutches five loaves of bread, one holds a wedge of cheese, one holds a huge haunch of meat, another wields a platter heaped with candies, and the last simply stands with arms crossed, his mouth wide and grinning to display teeth that have been filed to points.

In ancient Gastash, six noble houses counted themselves as senior among the aristocracy. These six statues symbolize those families. Each of these families had a different specialty, as indicated by their statue's adornments and pose. The names of the patriarchs are etched in Thassilonian at the base of the statues. These names are Inib (wine makers), Chivvik (bakers), Gorryan (cheesemakers), Hawfrey (butchers), Aanstrin (confectionaries), and Xerriock (cannibals). Each embraced the sin of gluttony in his own way.

F3. Abattoir

The scent in this room is appalling, a cloying reek of decaying flesh radiating from a half-dozen brutally savaged human bodies dressed in light blue but horribly bloodstained robes. Several of the bodies seem to have had limbs or organs removed.

These six bodies are all that remains of the 15 that Kazaven managed to claim for his research after the raid on the Abjurant Halls. The magical gear possessed by these dead wizards was mostly destroyed in the battle—Kazaven was happy to take just the bodies under his care. The bodies themselves are preserved from decay by the crypt's aura, and although it's been years, Kazaven works slowly and carefully. He's unsure when another boon like this might arrive and has rationed the bodies accordingly.

A character who examines the bodies and makes a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the work of a skilled necromancer in the patterns and methods of missing limbs and organs.

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F4. The Crypt of Lord Mankray of the House of Inib (EL 11)

A single sarcophagus of gold sits atop a white marble plinth on the eastern end of this wide hall. The bas-relief lid depicts a handsome man holding a sprig of grapes and a bottle of wine crossed over his chest. The eyes are large star sapphires and the grapes appear to be individual gemstones that could be worked free with the right tools. The walls of the room are carved with hundreds of narrow niches, each of which contains a different bottle of what appears to be wine. An opening to the south of the sarcophagus seems to lead to another nearby room, while to the east a flight of stairs winds down deeper along a curving passageway.

An investigation of the marble plinth reveals an engraved inscription written in Thassilonian: "Lord Anklerios Mankray Inib of the House of Inib: master vintner and beloved husband and father. An assassin's blade accomplished what hundreds of duels could not." Of course, the sarcophagus itself is empty, Anklerios's body long since taken away for necromantic needs. Anklerios Mankray was Inib's greatest winemaker, and the bottles buried in these walls constitute a sample of each vintage produced under his direction.

Creature: The Inibs did not want to send their greatest patriarch into the Ravenous Crypts unprotected and paid to have a clay golem, crafted by a sect of allied clerics of the rune goddess Lissala (see *Pathfinder* #1), installed as the crypt's guardian. Unfortunately for Anklerios's body, the golem was programmed to protect against intruders and did nothing when Kazaven came to take the body away for his work. The golem remains, eternally guarding an empty sarcophagus.

The golem itself resembles a stern woman with no mouth, identifiable with a DC 40 Knowledge (religion) check as the image of Lissala, dead goddess of runes. Indeed, countless runes (prayers to the goddess) are etched on its red clay body. The golem is also plated in iron—it's effectively wearing full plate armor, and its CR is 1 higher than normal as a result.

ARMORED CLAY GOLEM **CR 11**

AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 30
(+8 armor, –1 Dexterity, +14 natural, –1 size)

hp 90 (MM 134)

TACTICS

During Combat The golem emerges from the side room to confront anyone it sees or hears entering the main room. It does not attack gluttonous characters, even in self defense, but attacks all others on sight. This golem does not receive the bonuses for being a sinner detailed in the Sinners of Runeforge sidebar on page 24.

Morale The golem fights until destroyed but does not pursue foes from this chamber.

Treasure: The sarcophagus itself is only gold plated—with eight hours of work, a dedicated thief can scrape 800 gp of gold off the stone. Of greater value are the two star sapphire eyes (each worth 1,000 gp) and the dozen amethyst grapes (each worth 300 gp).

Although the wine in the bottles is long since spoiled, they are the components necessary to forge *runeweapons*.

F5. Research Room (EL Variable)

This chamber appears to be some sort of laboratory. Tables made of stacked sarcophagi support alchemical apparatus, books, carved bones, scrolls, and various pieces of anatomy that have been dissected and preserved in dozens of ways.

Several of these research rooms are located throughout the crypts, each capable of supplying a gifted necromancer with all of the base materials necessary to craft magic items, research spells, or create undead creatures. Since Kazaven destroyed his competition and prefers to use his own laboratory (area **F8**), these chambers have gone unused for thousands of years, but the supplies remain in workable shape thanks to Runeforge's preservative aura.

Creatures: Some of these rooms contain minor undead, creatures created and then forgotten by Kazaven. These include groups of ghasts, mummies, wights, or zombies, often in mixed company, but never more than six in all. These undead monsters lash at and attack PCs but have little chance against a group of high-level characters. You should use encounters with minor undead like this to augment the crypt's necromantic feel, keep the PCs on their toes, and perhaps give them a chance to feel tough, but don't bother focusing too much on these battles. There are more significant combats awaiting the PCs elsewhere in Runeforge.

Treasure: Each crypt contains one functional alchemist's lab. The books are both interesting and horrifying in their subject matter of the dead, and each room's collection can grant a +2 circumstance bonus on a Knowledge (religion) check made about undead. Each book lot is worth 400 gp and weighs 100 pounds. Their contents are very repetitive, so access to multiple lots does not increase the bonus granted.

F6. Infusion Chamber (EL 13)

The walls of this room have been plated in iron, each plate of which bears a single rune—the upside down hooked "U" shape. A ten-foot-long sarcophagus made of some sort of cloudy white crystal sits against the wall opposite the crypt's entrance. Bones and tattered cloth lie strewn everywhere across the floor, save for in the center of the room where a magic circle engraved on the floor pulses with light. The air in the room is shockingly cold.

This chamber is where the wardens of gluttony opened a portal to the Negative Energy Plane to infuse this wing of Runeforge with the negative energy elementals. They've long since closed the portal, but the room remains cold and the boundary here

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between life and death remains thin. The magic circle on the floor served as a focus for this necromantic energy and anyone who steps into the circle feels an undeniable chill.

The crystal sarcophagus itself is powerfully infused with negative energy—any living creature that touches it gains a negative level. It's a DC 15 Fortitude save to remove this negative level 24 hours later. The negative energy on the sarcophagus can be dispersed with a turn undead check (treat the sarcophagus as a 15 HD undead), or the sarcophagus can be destroyed by damage. Either event releases the creatures trapped within.

Crystal Sarcophagus

hp 100; **Hardness** 10; **Break** DC 32

Creature: To begin the process of infusing the walls of this wing with negative energy, two dread wraiths were conjured and bound inside the crystalline sarcophagus. If released, the dread wraiths attack any living creatures they sense. If both dread wraiths are slain, the negative energy infusing these chambers begins to fade—in 24 hours, it vanishes entirely.

Dread Wraiths (2) CR 11

hp 104 (MM 258)

TACTICS

During Combat The dread wraiths find life to be an irresistible lure and attempt to snuff it out when in its proximity. Otherwise, the dread wraiths remain motionless, seething and roiling, having forgotten anything else but the task of maintaining the energized walls of the Ravenous Crypts.

Morale The dread wraiths fight until destroyed.

Treasure: A secret door in the southern wall can be discovered with a DC 30 Search check. In the small room beyond is a tiny research laboratory, its books, materials, and supplies geared toward the process of infusing a complex with wraiths and negative energy. The books here are similar in nature to those found in the various research rooms. In addition, two *scrolls of plane shift* on a shelf next to a *scroll of binding*. In a nearby slender wood box rests a tuning fork attuned to Runeforge—the material component necessary to *plane shift* into this demiplane.

F7. Crypt Guardians (EL 12)

A single stone sarcophagus sits in the middle of this crypt, carvings of partially butchered cattle marching around its rim.

Creatures: Once the crypt of a Hawfrew family patriarch, Kazaven turned this crypt into a guard room. Another six Thassilonian mummies stand guard here, ready to attack any intruders. As in area **F1**, one of these mummies bears a permanent *telepathic bond* with Kazaven, and alerts him to intruders at the start of combat.

Thassilonian Mummies (6) CR 7

hp 90 each (see page 28)

F8. Research Lab (EL 13)

The bookshelf-lined walls of this room contain a large collection of dog-eared tomes, manuals, and scrolls, as well as jars of fluid in which float humanoid organs and bits of flesh. A dissected human torso sits atop one of the room's three stone tables.

Creature: This room is inhabited by an undead monster fashioned from a man named Xyoddin—once one Xerriock's greatest patriarch. His appetites were matched by few, making him one of his nation's most reprehensible members, for the Xerriocks were cannibals.

Kazaven's success with Xyoddin resulted in a ravenous undead monster that could not only serve the lich as a laboratory assistant but retain enough charm to engage the lich in conversation—what Xyoddin lacks in wits and intellect, he more than makes up for with the gift of telling Kazaven what he wants to hear. In many ways, the ravenous dread zombie is the perfect necromantic sycophant.

Currently, Xyoddin is in the process of meticulously dissecting one of the wizards harvested from the Abjurant Halls. In life, this wizard had treated his own flesh with strange magic that rendered him difficult to animate into undeath. Kazaven has tasked Xyoddin with the gruesome duty of cataloguing every tiny bit of the man's body, a task the ravenous zombie has been at for nearly a decade now. Every year, Kazaven rewards Xyoddin's work by allowing him to eat a portion of the dissected body.

Xyoddin Xerriock CR 13

Male ravenous dread zombie human aristocrat 12 (*Advanced Bestiary* 105, 211)

CE Medium undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +8

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +2 Dexterity, +2 natural)

hp 93 (12d12+15); fast healing 10

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities turn resistance +2; **DR** 5/—; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft. (cannot run)

Melee +2 *human bane dagger* +21/+16 (1d4+10/17–20) and bite +13 (1d4+4)

Ranged mwk dagger +16/+11 (1d4+8/17–20)

Special Attacks brain consumption, command zombies, favored prey, sprint

TACTICS

Before Combat Xyoddin tears free a portion of the torso's liver and eats it before combat begins if he has a chance, gaining the benefits of fast healing 10 for the fight to come.

During Combat If faced with enemies that include humans in their ranks, Xyoddin's terrible hunger pulls him to them that, causing him to ignore all non-human targets. He's able to hold back his ravenous

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urgings enough to resist taking the time to feast on a slain human if there remain other enemies to defeat, but only barely.

Morale Xyoddin fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 9, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Persuasive, Quick Draw, Toughness, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Balance +7, Bluff +19, Climb +15, Diplomacy +19, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Intimidate +25, Jump +15, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Perform (strings) +17, Profession (cook) +7, Search +8, Spot +8, Survival +8

Languages Giant, Thassilonian

SQ cannibalistic healing, hungry special attacks, ravenous body, telepathic bond

Gear *+3 chain shirt, +2 human-bane dagger*, 8 masterwork daggers

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Brain Consumption (Ex) When Xyoddin makes a successful grapple check to deal damage with his bite against a pinned or helpless living foe, the foe must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or die as Xyoddin consumes his brain. Creatures immune to critical hits and those with multiple heads are not killed by this attack. The save DC is Strength-based.

Cannibalistic Healing (Ex) So long as Xyoddin has fed on human flesh within the last 24 hours, he gains fast healing 10. Feeding on a human killed in the last hour heals all ability damage and ability drain he has taken.

Command Zombies (Su) Xyoddin can automatically command all normal zombies within 30 feet as a free action. Normal zombies never attack him unless they are compelled.

Favored Prey (Ex) Xyoddin gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls against humanoids and a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humanoids. Against humans, these bonuses increase to +4.

Hungry Special Attacks (Ex) Humans take a –2 penalty on saving throws against Xyoddin's special attacks.

Ravenous Body (Su) Normally, Xyoddin must eat human flesh at least once every 3 days or he begins to starve, but the sustaining presence radiated by Runeforge prevents this.

Sprint (Ex) Once per day, Xyoddin can move at a speed of 300 feet when he makes a charge.

Telepathic Bond (Sp) Xyoddin has a permanent telepathic bond with Kazaven.

Unnatural Aura (Su) Any animal within 30 feet of Xyoddin becomes panicked and remains so for as long as it remains within this proximity.

Treasure: The various lenses and magnifying glasses built into the contraption around the examination table are worth 100 gp each—there are 10 in all. The research books are worth a total of 10,000 gp. They detail various experiments, summoning rituals, chemical concoctions, and steps that Zutha's minions followed to attain their various states of undeath. They provide a +5 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion) checks made regarding necromancy and undead creatures.

A character who spends at least a few hours looking through these books quickly comes across a fairly significant section detailing Runelord Zutha's final task for the Ravenous Crypts—the development of a place and method for him to retreat from the world into stasis, should Thassilon come to a sudden end. Zutha asked his agents in Runeforge to develop a way to split his phylactery, a book entitled *The Gluttonous Tome*, into three pieces, that could then be hidden in the world far from Thassilon. Then, after the dust of the empire's fall had settled, these three fragments could be brought back together to call him back from the beyond. That Kazaven and the other (now destroyed) necromancers accomplished this goal is recorded, but no indication of where the three parts of the phylactery were sent can be found.

Development: If Kazaven becomes aware of the fact that the Ravenous Crypts have been invaded, he orders Xyoddin to begin patrolling the crypts to look for intruders. Before Xyoddin sets off on this patrol, Kazaven allows Xyoddin to feast on some human flesh to activate his fast healing. Xyoddin travels to area **F2** to start his patrol, then moves to all of the abandoned research labs one after the other (starting with the nearest one first). He keeps the lich regularly updated via their telepathic link—if Xyoddin encounters the PCs, he attacks them at once, but during



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Staff of Hungry Shadows



Aura Strong conjuration, evocation, and necromancy; **CL** 13th

Slot —; **Price** 65,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

This staff is made of scorched and twisted wood and is set with a crystal sphere filled with swirling smoke. It allows the use of the following spells:

- *ray of enfeeblement* (1 charge)
- *darkness* (1 charge)
- *vampiric touch* (1 charge)
- *enervation* (2 charges)
- *summon shadow* (as *summon monster V* but summons 1 shadow, 2 charges)
- *call devourer* (as *planar binding* but calls 1 devourer, 3 charges)

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Staff, *darkness*, *enervation*, *planar binding*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *summon monster V*, *vampiric touch*; **Cost** 32,500 gp, 2,600 XP

the fight keeps Kazaven updated on the PCs' capabilities, tactics, and apparent weaknesses.

F9. Assembly Room (EL 15)

Lanterns hang from hooks over the four large tables scattered throughout this chamber. Two of the tables are covered with preserved human body parts that have been stitched together with thick thread to partially form a pair of patchwork human corpses. Stools and small steel work trays covered in slender knives, clamps, hooks, saws, screws, needles, and other less identifiable tools surround each of the large tables.

This is where Kazaven the lich performs the bulk of his work and research, and likely where he's encountered by the PCs. Stone boxes under the worktables contain caches of more dismembered body parts. The two stitched-together corpses on the tables are nearly completed subjects that Kazaven has prepared from leftover body parts—his hope is to create undead from reconstructed parts rather than simply limiting himself to whole bodies, but many of his previous experiments along these lines proved gruesomely unstable.

In the southeast corner of the room is a hidden trapdoor that can be discovered with a DC 30 Search check. Beyond is a narrow tunnel leading to area **F10**.

Creatures: Kazaven sits on a stool at the worktable furthest from the entrance, stitching together the last pieces of one of the prospective patchwork undead minions. Although Kazaven takes the time to cast several defensive spells once he knows the Ravenous Crypts have been invaded, he's not initially looking for a fight. In fact, similar to the Scribbler earlier in the adventure, Kazaven is quite curious what has become of the outside world, and when the PCs arrive he bids them answer questions like those the Scribbler asked. Kazaven has very little interest in responding to the PCs' questions, though, and if they demand answers or resist him, he decides to kill them and extract the knowledge he seeks from their soon-to-be-undead bodies.

Kazaven CR 15

Male human lich necromancer 13

CE Medium undead

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

Aura fear (60-ft. radius, DC 19)

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 22
(+5 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dexterity, +5 natural)

hp 112 (13d12+13)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities +4 turn resistance; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, mind-affecting, polymorph, undead traits

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee touch +8 (1d8+6 negative energy plus paralysis; Will DC 19 half damage, Fort DC 19 negates paralysis)

Spells Prepared (CL 13th; +8 touch, +9 ranged touch)

7th—quickened *displacement*, *finger of death* (DC 27), quickened *vampiric touch*

6th— quickened *blindness/deafness* (DC 22), quickened *cat's grace*, *chain lightning* (DC 24), *mislead* (DC 24)

5th—quickened *magic missile*, *telekinesis* (DC 23), quickened *true strike*, *wall of force*, *waves of fatigue*

4th—*bestow curse* (DC 24), *contagion* (DC 24), *dimension door*, *fear* (DC 24), *greater invisibility*, *mass reduce person* (DC 22), *stone shape*

3rd—extended *false life* (already cast), *fly*, *gaseous form*, *ray of exhaustion*, *slow* (DC 21), *stinking cloud* (DC 21), *tongues* (already cast)

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 22), *ghoul touch* (DC 22), *glitterdust* (DC 20), *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand*

1st—*chill touch* (DC 21), *grease* (DC 19), *magic missile* (3), *obscuring mist*, *reduce person* (DC 19)

0—*arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*

Prohibited Schools abjuration, enchantment

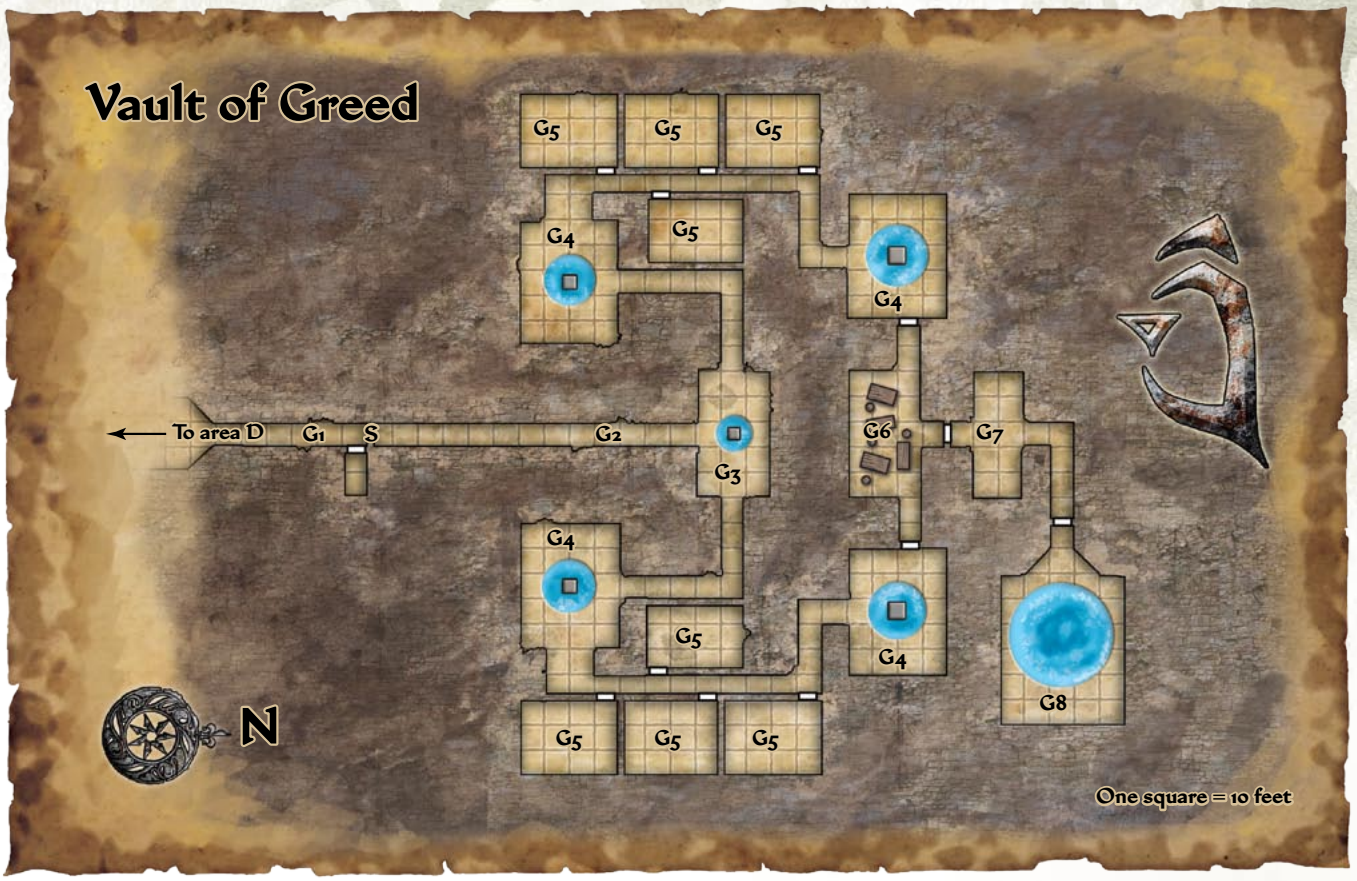
TACTICS

Before Combat Once he knows the PCs are in the crypts, Kazaven casts extended *false life* and *tongues* on himself. He then calls a devourer to guard him using his *staff of hungry shadows*.

During Combat Kazaven opens battles by casting *finger of death* at a spellcaster and quickened *displacement* on himself. He then casts *wall of force* to seal himself off from the PCs, giving him time to cast *greater invisibility*, quickened *cat's grace*, *fly*, *mirror image*, and *spectral hand*. During this time, he lets the conjured devourer keep the PCs busy. If the PCs haven't

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breached his wall by the time he's done casting preparatory spells, he *dimension doors* back into their midst and begins hitting them with spells. If he needs more minions, Kazaven casts *stone shape* on a nearby wall to release several wraiths, hoping they provide additional distractions.

Morale Kazaven values his own immortal existence too much to stick around in a fight he's losing. If reduced to less than 30 hit points, he uses *mislead* to escape by casting *gaseous form* and retreating to area **F10**, where he gathers his phylactery before triggering the trap in the room to heal his damage. Given time, he recovers his spells and then seeks revenge on the PCs. If confronted there, Kazaven has little choice but to fight until destroyed, but he makes sure to trigger the trap in the room before a fight begins.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 26, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +6

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy)

Skills Concentration +17, Hide +10, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +22, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +25, Knowledge (religion) +25, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +17, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +27, Spot +11

Languages Abyssal, Giant, Thassilonian

SQ *contingency*, summon familiar (currently none), *telepathic bond*

Combat Gear *staff of hungry shadows* (43 charges); **Other Gear** *bracers of armor +5, headband of intellect +4, ring of protection +2*, contingency statuette of Kazaven worth 2,000 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency (Sp) If Kazaven is grappled, a *dimension door* spell activates on him.

Telepathic Bond (Sp) Kazaven has a permanent *telepathic bond* with his minion Xyoddin and with one of the Thassilonian mummies in area **F1**.

Treasure: The surgical equipment here was created from silver jewelry and decorations looted from nearby crypts via *fabricate* spells. The entire collection in this room is worth 1,200 gp.

F10. Kazaven's Phylactery (EL 13)

This crypt contains three stone sarcophagi, each bearing detailed carvings of capering skeletons and dancing corpses.

These three sarcophagi contain Kazaven's three greatest treasures. All three are protected by a dangerous trap.

Trap: If any of these three coffins is opened or molested in any way, the skeletons and corpses carved on the sides of all three suddenly animate. Hundreds of arms point out into the room, and from these hundreds of outstretched fingers spring beams of necromantic fury.

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Necromantic Deathtrap — CR 13

Type magical; **Search** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic after one round delay

Effect All creatures in the room take 14d6 points of negative energy damage every other round (DC 25 Will save halves)—undead creatures are instead healed for a like amount. Every even-numbered round, the trap becomes inert as it recharges its energy from the surrounding walls, firing again automatically every odd-numbered round until the room is deserted or the trap is disabled. A successful turn undead attempt against a 13 HD monster renders this trap inert for 1 minute, or disables it completely if the turn attempt achieves a destroyed effect.

Treasure: One of the sarcophagi contains 11 spellbooks Kazaven has claimed from enemies and fallen allies. The second coffin contains 7,000 gp in mixed jewels, gems, and fine linens Kazaven stores for *fabricate* spells; an *eversmoking bottle*; a *golembane scarab*; and all of the lich's personal spellbooks. The final coffin is itself Kazaven's phylactery, a fortified magic item in its own right. Kazaven opted for a stronger, sturdier phylactery rather than a small portable one, since he is bound to Runeforge and cannot leave its halls.

Kazaven's Phylactery

hp 150; **Hardness** 20; **Break DC** 50

PART SIX: THE VAULT OF GREED

This is the research center and lair of a group of the Runelord Karzoug's most talented and gifted followers. They have spent years perfecting the rune magic of greed for their master, amassing treasures for themselves, and stealing a few things from their enemies.

During the attack on the Lords of Envy and the ensuing, short-lived battle that followed, most of the Lords of Greed were slain, leaving behind a half-dozen bickering apprentices. One of these apprentices turned out to be more scheming and backstabbing than the others—a gifted wizard who had long ago turned his flesh into mithral. This man, a transmuter named Ordikon, murdered, transformed, and defeated the other apprentices, but his rampage was somewhat short-sighted. He now commands a nearly empty vault, and while he has great wealth, there is no one to lord it over, and nothing to spend it on. The only thing that has prevented him from descending fully into madness is whispers from his lord Karzoug. Ordikon realizes that Karzoug's near-awakening is what reactivated the *runeforge pool*, and he knows his master is nearing a return to power.

Many parts of this branch of Runeforge have been transmuted into gold or festooned with precious gems, most of which have been magically treated to revert to stone and lead if taken from the vault. Only the items listed in each area's individual treasure sections can be looted from this wing. All areas are lit with *continual light* spells cast upon gems set high on the walls unless noted otherwise in a room's description.

G1. Pilferer's Bane (EL 10)

A large iron door studded with dozens of colorful gemstones stands in the eastern wall at the end of this corridor. Although the door appears to have no latch, a depression in the center contains a keyhole.

When a character successfully enters this vault, he finds himself in a dead end about 60 feet from Runeforge's central hub. The door is in fact a trap intended to lure trespassers to their death. The actual entrance into the Vault of Greed is hidden at the end of the corridor. The PCs may locate this secret door with a DC 30 Search check.

Trap: The door is actually a thick iron plate set in the wall. It has a non-functional internal lock, but no handle. The iron slab is attached to a metal piston in a recessed area behind it. When any part of the fake door is touched, the piston thrusts forward with incredible force, smashing anything in its path against the opposing wall. A chamber behind the piston houses complex counterweights and gears that retract the piston and resets the trap.

Crushing Door — CR 10

Type mechanical; **Search** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 24

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect crush (12d10 bludgeoning, DC 24 Reflex save to avoid); multiple targets (all creatures in four adjacent 5-ft. squares).

Treasure: The precious stones embedded in the fake iron door are only worth a total of 50 gp in all—hardly worth the trouble of prying them out.

G2. Morphic Mist (EL 10)

A beautiful tunnel of polished wood inlaid with silver and gold runes stretches for at least a hundred feet before ending at a wall of greenish mist sparkling with silver motes of light.

The wood that lines the walls here is an inch thick, beyond which is solid stone. The Thassilonian runes carved into the walls describe the works of Karzoug and extol his gifts in the art of transmutation. A character could study these runes and learn much of Runelord Karzoug—consult the appendix to "Fortress of the Stone Giants" in *Pathfinder* #4 for a list of what information can be gained with a successful Knowledge check.

Hazard: The mist acts as a secondary defense against intruders, starting at this location and continuing north all the way to the entrance to area **G3**. Any non-greedy creature who enters it must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of a *baleful polymorph* heightened to 9th level to resist being transformed into a goldfish and then teleported into

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one of the pools in area **G4**. Holding one's breath is no defense against the morphic mist. The mist can be dispersed by any strong blast of wind, but as soon as the wind ceases, the mist refills the hall.

G3. Trouble with Mephits (EL 12)

This chamber is paved with ivory tiles, each one engraved with a silver rune depicting what appears to be a claw gripping a gemstone. The walls and ceiling are of polished marble. A large silver basin in the center of the room contains an icy sculpture of a whale spraying crystal-clear water from its blowhole. The water cascades around it to keep the basin full, but never quite overflowing.

This fountain acts as a tiny portal to the Elemental Plane of Water, created as much as a display of ostentatious opulence as much as anything else. The water itself is cool and refreshing, but hardly required for those dwelling in the complex.

Creatures: The portal to the Plane of Water attracts water mephits for some reason its creators have never been able to decipher. No matter how many times the Lords of Greed have killed them off or driven them away, more mephits always eventually appear. At any one time, 2d4 mephits frolic in the waters of this pool. Despite their small stature and relative weakness, the mephits are brave to the point of being foolhardy.

Initially hostile, the mephits nonetheless don't initiate attacks on intruders, instead hurling insults ("Oh look! Another group of fleshies come to slobber in our pool!"). If the PCs can make the mephits at least friendly, the creatures can be conversed with. The water mephitis complain that while they enjoy playing in the fountain, a "mean silver man" keeps coming and casting hurtful spells at them. They know a little bit about his combat tactics (each mephit knows at least a dozen others of its kind who were killed by Ordikon), and if the PCs ask the right questions, the mephits can give them a few tips on how to fight him. At some point, the mephits also volunteer that they know of a lot more fountains in this complex, but that the biggest of them is "made of magic."

Water Mephit (2d4) **CR 3**

hp 19 (MM 185)

TACTICS

During Combat The mephits recently had a run-in with Ordikon and take the PCs for more enemies. Half of them hurl their acidic globs at the PCs while the others attempt to summon more water mephits to aid them. They prefer to use their acidic globs and breath weapons over melee.

Morale If more than half of the water mephits are destroyed, the rest dive through the ice whale's blowhole to flee back to the Elemental Plane of Water.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to learn something useful from the mephits, grant them a CR 7 experience award.

G4. Fountains

A decorative fountain sprays colored water toward the domed ceiling, thirty feet above. The water cascades back down into a large pool surrounding the fountain, in which several colorful goldfish swim. The fountain itself depicts a human wizard holding a staff in one hand. The other hand is raised over his head, and it's from this hand's palm that the water issues in a spray.



ORDIKON

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Staff of Mithral Might

Aura Strong transmutation; **CL** 12th

Slot —; **Price** 46,500 gp

DESCRIPTION

This staff is made of silver, with a shimmering sphere of mithral at either end. One end features a golden snake wrapped around the staff and cradling the larger of these two mithral spheres. It allows the use of the following spells:

- *bull's strength* (1 charge)
- *enlarge person* (1 charge)
- *telekinesis* (3 charges)
- *flesh to stone* (4 charges)

The staff may be used as a weapon, functioning as a +2 *quarterstaff*. It also grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence as long as it is possessed. These two attributes continue to function after all the charges are expended.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, *bull's strength*, *enlarge person*, *flesh to stone*, *fox's cunning*, *telekinesis*; **Cost** 23,250 gp, 1,860 XP

The water in each fountain is normal and the flow is magically sustained, siphoned from the pool in area **G3** via narrow underground runnels. The goldfish in the pools are mostly that, but any PCs who succumbed to the morphic mist in area **G2** can be found in a random one of these fountains. Of course, correctly identifying them for what they are might be difficult. If you wish, some of these goldfish could be other NPCs who have fallen victim to the morphic mist in the past—these should be adventurers who stumbled into Runeforge years ago and have been trapped here ever since. If your party needs reinforcements (or replacement PCs), this is a good place to introduce them—you can use the stats for the pregenerated characters at the end of this book for these NPCs if you wish.

G5. Fabrication Chambers

Each of these rooms served as living quarters for a Lord of Greed—although they had no need to sleep or eat, each lord could retire here to relax or entertain himself. Each room is empty, save for a scattering of raw materials like sheets of cloth, stacks of lumber, blocks of stone, metal bars, and bones.

These rooms radiate strong transmutation magic, and any greedy character who enters one immediately understands how to use it. A character may use the room to cast *fabricate* at will as a spell-like ability. The rooms themselves do not provide the raw materials for the spell—those must be provided by the character. Items created in these rooms cannot exist outside of them—an object created in here reverts to its base materials if brought outside into the hall. Likewise, an object left in here for 24 hours reverts back to its base materials, explaining the raw materials in each of these rooms.

G6. Research Center (EL 14)

Rows of thick wooden worktables occupy the center of this long chamber. Bookcases lining the walls hold hundreds of books and scrolls. Crates next to or pushed under the worktables appear to be filled with an odd variety of mundane items, such as rope, sticks, sacks, tools, and cookware. A dog on one of the tables looks dead, though its hind end appears to be made of some kind of shiny metal. A few other animals pace back and forth in small metal cages—a house cat, a few rats, a snake, and a small white-faced monkey.

This is where the sorcerers of greed experiment with their craft. The dog was used in an experiment in which Ordikon was attempting to create another mithral creature. His experiment killed the animal and transmuted part of it into iron. The other animals are living creatures Ordikon caught in the Festering Maze—he often uses *baleful polymorph* to change centipedes, spiders, and other vermin into creatures more suitable for his current needs.

Creatures: Ordikon is here, endlessly studying books on metallurgy and trying to figure out how to enhance his greatest triumph. Unfortunately for him, the transition of flesh to metal unhinged his mind—ever since his change, he's lost the ability to learn and grow. Ironically, this transformation also granted him immortality, yet although he's existed for 10,000 years, Ordikon hasn't expanded his knowledge since his triumphant (and cursed) transformation. He retains his intelligence and capacity for logic, yet no longer has the drive and creativity he once possessed, his mind having grown more like that of a construct over the centuries.

Ordikon has vague memories of the time before his transformation. He can remember, at times, that other wizards worked with him, and that he once served a man named Karzoug. His memories today tell him these others were like him, metal men who deserved to rule over the lesser realm of transient flesh. Arguments to the contrary only raise his anger. His madness and warped memories make him a poor subject for interrogation about Thassilon.

Ordikon, the Mithral Mage **CR 14**

Male mithral-clad human transmuter 12

NE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 13, flat-footed 26
(+4 armor, +3 Dexterity, +8 natural, +4 shield)

hp 93 (12d4+48)

Fort +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities medium fortification; **DR** 10/adamantine (first 120 points of damage); **Immune** electricity (first 120 points of damage); **Resist** fire 15

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Spd 60 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

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Melee *staff of mithral might* +10/+5 (1d6+3)

Spells Prepared (CL 12th, +8 touch, +10 ranged touch)

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, quickened *mirror image*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *cone of cold* (DC 20), *dismissal*, quickened *shield*, *wall of force*

4th—*dimension door* (2), *fear* (DC 19), *mass reduce person* (DC 21), *stoneskin*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 18), *fly*, extended *false life*, *slow* (DC 20), *protection from energy*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *cat's grace*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), extended *mage armor*, *scorching ray*, extended *unseen servant*

1st—*expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 16), *magic missile* (3), *reduce person* (DC 18), *true strike*

0—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Ordikon starts every day by casting extended *false life*, *mage armor*, and *unseen servant*. In the event that he hears combat nearby, he takes the time to cast the following spells before investigating: *shield*, *stoneskin*, *fly*, *protection from energy* (electricity), *cat's grace*, and *expeditious retreat*. These effects are included in his stats above.

During Combat If caught off-guard, Ordikon *dimension doors* to area **G8**, casts his short-term defensive spells as outlined above, then returns to **G6** to confront the PCs. He always opens with a *disintegrate* against any obvious clerics, along with a quickened *mirror image*. He also uses his *unseen servants* to pick up and carry away items that PCs drop or lose to his telekinetic disarming attempts.

Morale Ordikon fights until reduced to 20 hit points or less, whereupon he *dimension doors* to area **G8**. If confronted there, he fights to the death.

Base Stats Without his protective spells in effect, Ordikon's stats change as follows:

Init +1; **AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; **hp** 78; **Ref** +7; **Defensive Abilities** medium fortification; **Resist** fire 15; **Spd** 30 ft.; **Spells Prepared** (+8 ranged touch); **Dex** 12

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 20, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +7

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (transmutation)

Skills Concentration +20, Craft (metalworking) +17, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (nature) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Spellcraft +23, Swim –2

Languages Draconic, Terran, Thassilonian

SQ summon familiar (currently none)

Combat Gear *staff of mithral might* (CL 12th, 44 charges); **Other Gear** *robe of resistance +1* (as *cloak of resistance +1*), *rod of metal and mineral detection*, *amulet of health* +2, 500 gp in diamond dust

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Medium Fortification (Ex) Whenever a sneak attack or critical hit is scored against Ordikon, there is a 75% chance that the extra damage is negated.

Vulnerable to Electricity (Ex) Ordikon takes 150% normal damage from electricity attacks.

RECHARGING RESULTS

Use this table to determine the results of recharging items in area **G8**.

d% Roll	Result
01–03	**Explosion**: The item explodes and is destroyed. The explosion is a 30-foot-radius burst of a random energy type that deals 1d6 points of damage per charge in the item when it exploded (Reflex DC 15 halves the damage).
04–25	**Backfire**: The pool drains 1d10 charges and deals 1d6 points of damage (of a random energy type) per charge drained to the character (Reflex DC 15 halves this damage).
26–50	**No Effect**: The item glows as a torch for 1d4 hours, but gains no charges.
51–90	**Recharge**: The item glows and regains 1d10 charges.
91–99	**Full Recharge**: The item glows twice as bright as a torch and becomes fully charged.
100	**Supercharge**: The item now glows as detailed above permanently, and automatically recharges every seven days on its own.

IS THIS A GAME BREAKER?

Many GMs will probably decide that the Pool of Elemental Arcana is too powerful because it has the potential to break their campaign by introducing a recharge mechanic. If you feel it's too powerful, consider keeping it in, but limiting its powers so that it can only work once per item, or perhaps it only works once per year.

When I playtested this encounter, my group loved it even though a couple of them got hit hard by the ability drain when they started failing Reflex saves trying to dip a few small items into the pool. Considering there are several encounters in Runeforge in which the PCs stand to lose some (possibly a lot) of their gear, your players will really love finding this room and gaining some of its benefits.

—Stephen S. Greer

Treasure: The research books scattered around this room are worth a total of 10,000 gp. They detail various experiments, transmutations, alchemical concoctions, and partial notes on the conundrum of transmuting lead into gold. They provide a +5 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion) checks made regarding transmutation and constructs. A character who spends several hours reading through these books discovers notes and descriptions of the solution the Lords of Greed hit upon to protect Karzoug from the fall of Thassilon. By building a *runewell* larger than any before, he could place his body and mind in stasis between realities, suspended between Golarion and a hostile world the books refer to as Leng. Once the dust settled, the plan was for the Lords of Greed to travel to Xin-Shalast, use the power of the *runeforge pool* to open Karzoug's *runewell*, and bring him back into Golarion to reclaim his empire. The exact method of how they intended to free him is not recorded in the books (although once

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SOFT-CORE'S NOT FOR EVERYONE

The Iron Cages are going to offend some people. It's flirting with the line between PG-13 and R-rated subject matter. I admit that. But when writing about the minions of this seductress, I decided that to gloss over the area dedicated to her chosen form of sin magic would be awkward and clunky, and I think many readers would feel cheated. If you think it's going to be a problem with your group's sensitivities, I strongly suggest turning this section into a smoldering ruin thanks to one of this faction's enemies and placing the *runeforged weapon* component in the possession of that same enemy.

If you want to include this section but tone it down, you can just gloss over the lewd subject matter and turn encounters with the demons into straightforward hack 'n slash affairs.

—Stephen S. Greer

Of course, if you decide to take this section of the adventure in the other direction, I'm sure Delvahine won't mind. Just make sure you know your players' limits!

—James Jacobs

the characters visit the Shimmering Veils, they get a pretty good idea). Unfortunately, the Lords of Greed perished not long after Thassilon fell, leaving Ordikon the only one to do the job. After his transformation into the Mithral Mage, even he forgot his former master. Thus, for 10,000 years, Karzoug has waited.

Also present here are Ordikon's spellbooks; a wizard who examines these finds them to be particularly unusual in that many of the notes and formulae within are redundant. Spells generally take up twice as much room as they need to in these books, as if the wizard who recorded them had a habit of repeating himself in various ways without realizing it.

G7. Hall of Golden Repose

This wide hall is floored in polished wooden planks, its walls covered in colorful jade tiles. The ceiling is made of lustrous stone that reflects the light of three decorative lanterns that brightly illuminate ten gleaming golden statues of men and women in various poses of combat readiness.

All ten of the statues in this room were once soldiers and consorts in service to the Lords of Greed. These unfortunate souls were painfully gilt while still alive but paralyzed, then posed in pleasing shapes as the gold coating their bodies dried. A close examination of the statues reveals looks of surprise, anger, and fear on their faces. Each statue is effectively hollow, containing a leathery, brittle corpse. Unfortunately, like the extravagant decor, the gold of these statues cannot exist beyond this wing of Runeforge.

Treasure: Although the gold in this room isn't treasure the PCs can take away from Runeforge, one of the people imprisoned within swallowed a diamond worth 3,000 gp before she was put on display. That diamond now resides inside of that statue's hollow left foot.

G8. Pool of Elemental Arcana

Silver beams support a domed ceiling covered in polished darkwood panels inlaid with spiky glyphs in gold and platinum. Most of the chamber's floor ripples in an immense, forty-foot-diameter pool of deep blue liquid. Flashes of lightning and gouts of flame dance along its surface, punctuated by thunderclaps, hisses, and cacophonous shrieks. Vague shapes writhe and twist in the currents below the pool's surface.

This is the Pool of Elemental Arcana, an attempt by the Lords of Greed to build a second *runeforge well* that they alone could use, unhappy as they were with sharing the one at Runeforge's center with the other wizards. Their skills, however, as great as they were, could not match what the Runelords themselves had created with the *runeforge well*, and the Pool of Elemental Arcana is a flawed creation. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check is enough to reveal that the waters of the pool are infused with raw magic, and that it could possibly be used to repair or recharge magic items.

Hazard: The pool itself is only 2 feet deep, but dangerous nonetheless. The pool's presence causes non-greedy souls to quickly grow disoriented and confused—such creatures must make a DC 18 Will save each round they remain within 10 feet of the pool's edge. Failure results in 1d6 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma drain as the character's soul is siphoned away and converted into raw magic by the pool. Physical contact with the pool's waters imparts a –4 penalty on the save. Any creature drained to 0 Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma is absorbed mentally and physically into the water, his body and soul converted to raw magic. This utterly destroys the creature and makes it impossible to return him to life save by a carefully worded *wish* or *miracle* followed by a *true resurrection*.

Treasure: The Pool of Elemental Arcana has the capability of recharging magic items, yet it draws the power to do so from those nearby. Immersing a magic item in the waters causes it to glow brightly for 1d4 hours. If an item with charges is dipped in the pool, roll on the table on page 37 to determine what occurs. Each time an item is dipped more than once a day, apply a cumulative –5 penalty on the d% roll.

A character who attempts to recharge an item or gather water from the pool must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid touching the water. Once taken from the pool, the water becomes pure water that radiates faint transmutation magic but is otherwise unremarkable (except for its value as a component for forging *runforged weapons*—see page 57).

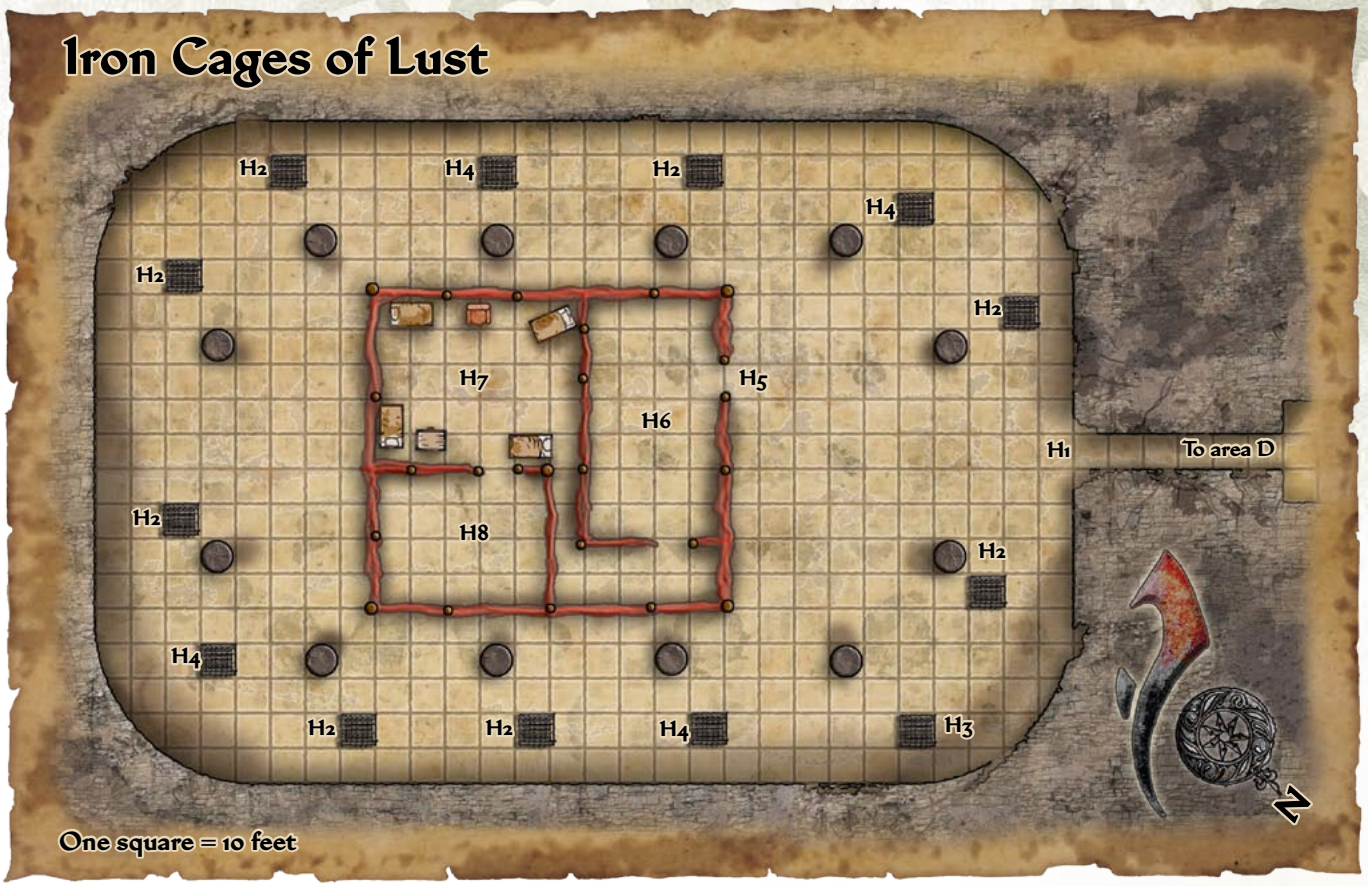
The pool itself can be rendered inert for 1d4 rounds by a successful *dispel magic* against CL 20th; water harvested from the pool while it is inert still works as a *runeforged weapon* component.

PART SEVEN: THE IRON CAGES

At the time of its construction, this wing of Runeforge was intended as a place for the breaking and training of slaves, by both magical means and more traditional methods. Originally tended by a sisterhood of enchanters, these wizards were also called

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upon by Runelord Sorshen to aid in developing methods for her to achieve immortality, and ultimately, a method of surviving beyond the fall of Thassilon. Unlike several other wings, though, no information on how these goals were met remains, for not long after Thassilon's fall, the sisters were betrayed by one of their own servants, a succubus named Delvahine.

After she orchestrated the betrayal and murder of her mistresses, Delvahine was enraged to find that she was unable to escape Runeforge and return to the Abyss. For several hundred years her rage continued, until finally she accepted her fate and set to making her new home something more befitting her desires. She transformed much of this wing into one immense room, recruiting aid from the other wings by secretly dominating or otherwise manipulating the denizens found therein.

Today, Delvahine rules the Iron Cages, a dominant mistress in charge of a small army of enslaved and supplicant minions. Her four favorite followers are her children, alu-demons who serve her needs as guardians and lovers as she demands. Alu-demons are the offspring of a succubus and a human—in this case, Delvahine and four long-dead apprentices abducted from other wings of Runeforge. Delvahine has no real ties to Thassilon or the runelords, but the chambers she guards are key (along with those of pride) to Karzoug's defeat.

Aging functions unusually in the Iron Cages. Creatures cease aging once they become adults, and as long as they remain in the cathedral, they are immortal. This immortality does not extend beyond this wing, though, and a creature that exits it is suddenly subjected to the weight of years and ages accordingly. All of the denizens of the Iron Cages are thousands of years old, and if they were to leave, they would immediately crumble to dust—the only exception to this is Delvahine herself. Already immortal, the succubus can come and go as she pleases—under the limits imposed by Runeforge.

H1. Cathedral of Seduction

The heavy iron doors leading into this area are unlocked. They swing open easily and are weighted to automatically close on their own.

This grand cathedral can be called nothing less than opulent. The floor is covered in polished red and white tiles. Thick pillars carved into the likenesses of nude women with long flowing hair circle the room and support a ninety-foot-high domed ceiling, where a gargantuan mural depicts men and women engaged in all manner of carnal acts. Numerous plain ten-foot-by-ten-foot cubes line the outer ring of the cathedral, while at its center stands a pavilion of opaque silk sheets. Near the walls of the cathedral stand several delicate-looking cages, their sides more decorative than practical. Some of them contain what appear to be long-dead bodies, although one body in a cage in the chamber's northern corner seems to be clinging to life.

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This wing consists of one room—an immense cathedral lined with ivory pillars carved into the likeness of Sorshen, the Runelord of Lust. The pillars are made of iron inlaid with ivory, depicting her in various lewd positions. The cages are display cases of a sort for several of Delvahine's conquests; they're detailed in areas **H2**–**H4**.

Creatures: Delvahine's alu-demon children are the caretakers of this chamber. Allowed to enter their mistress's palisade only when invited or under the gravest of emergencies, they spend long hours out here, either on guard—tormenting what prisoners they have—or otherwise whiling away the hours. The four sisters are named Eryalla, Lelyrin, Voivod, and Zevashala. They resemble strikingly beautiful human women, save for the horns on their brows, their fangs, their taloned feet, and their batlike wings. Each wears little more than a few pieces of magical jewelry and flimsy garments, but before they come to investigate intruders, they take care to retrieve their ranseurs. They react to the arrival of PCs with excitement, flying into the air and circling overhead, making lewd and frank appraisals of each PC's appearance and possible sexuality. The alu-demons keep their mistress Delvahine apprised of the situation via telepathy, and until the PCs attack, try to enter the pavilion, or attempt to interact with any of the cages, the alu-demons are content to cruelly mock and flirt with the invaders. As soon as any of these conditions occur, though, the alu-demons swoop down to attack.

If the PCs have already explored the Shimmering Veils of Pride and mention Vraxeris (see page 45) by name or indicate that they have some information from him that Delvahine might wish to see, the alu-demons hold their attack long enough to telepathically alert Delvahine. The succubus then contacts the PCs via the same means, asking them to state their purpose. Her initial attitude is hostile. If the telepathic conversation can make her at least friendly with a DC 40 Diplomacy check, she grants permission for the PCs to enter her pavilion to speak with her. In this case, the PCs themselves are escorted by all four alu-demons.

All four alu-demons are submissives, a prestige class that focuses on protecting and serving a chosen master—or in this case, mistress.

Eryalla, Lelyrin, Voivod, and Zevashala (4) **CR 10**

Female alu-demon submissive 5 (*Tome of Horrors* 69, *Plot & Poison* 73)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +15, Spot +15

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DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 19
(+3 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dexterity, +4 natural)
hp 103 (6d8+5d12+44)
Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12
Defensive Abilities evasion, pain is pleasure, the beauty of blood; **DR** 5/cold iron or good, 1/piercing or bludgeoning; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 12

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)
Melee mwk ranseur +17/+12/+7 (2d4+6/×3) or 2 claws +16 (1d3+4 plus vampiric touch)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with mwk ranseur)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
At will—*charm person* (DC 14), *desecrate*, *detect thoughts* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 16)
1/day—*dimension door*

TACTICS

During Combat The alu-demons start combat by using *suggestion* on heavily armored foes, suggesting that those foes take off their armor and gear so the demons can "get a better look at them." They then attempt to *charm person* any foes who resist this initial suggestion. They avoid melee as long as they can, hovering just out of reach of non-flying foes and using their ranseurs. If one alu-demon is forced into melee, the others join their sister, one flanking the foe and the others standing directly behind their sisters to attack with the ranseur via reach so all four gain sneak attack damage.
Morale If reduced to less than 50 hit points, an alu-demon *dimension doors* to area **H7** to take up a protective position at her mistress's side. If that alu-demon has a charmed PC, she takes that PC with her when she retreats. Delvahine may or may not offer her children and their new pets healing.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +15
Feats Dodge, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Mobility
Skills Bluff +15, Concentration +15, Escape Artist +15, Hide +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +15, Move Silently +10, Search +10, Spot +15
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.
SQ mistress, mistress said so, mock obedience, shield the mistress, tirelessness
Gear masterwork ranseur, *bracers of armor +3*, *amulet of health +2*, *ring of protection +2*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Change Shape (Su) An alu-demon can assume the form of any Small or Medium humanoid.
Mistress Said So (Su) A submissive acting on Delvahine's commands gains a +1 morale bonus on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks; these bonuses are not included in the stats above.
Mistress These alu-demons acknowledge Delvahine as their mistress. If they ever voluntarily disobey her or willingly allow her to come to harm, they lose the mistress said so and mock obedience abilities and take a permanent –6 penalty on saves to resist Enchantment spells. Should Delvahine die despite their efforts, the alu-demons suffer this penalty as well until they are accepted by a new mistress or master.
Mock Obedience (Su) Any time a submissive alu-demon falls prey to a spell or effect that charms or controls her, she may make a second saving throw to break its hold at any time, regardless of the spellcaster's normal degree of control or whether or not the submissive was commanded to do something against her nature. If that saving throw fails, the submissive cannot make another unless the normal rules of the spell indicate that she can.
Pain is Pleasure (Ex) Whenever subjected to nonlethal damage, a submissive ignores the first 5 points of damage.
Shield the Mistress (Ex) Up to nine times a day, whenever Delvahine would be hit by an attack and a submissive alu-demon is within 5 feet of Delvahine, the alu-demon may make a Reflex save (DC 20 + any enhancement bonuses on the attack roll) to be hit by the attack instead. She may also protect Delvahine from any attack that forces her to make a Reflex save for half damage—the submissive can make this save instead, and on a success, Delvahine takes no damage and the alu-demon takes it instead. The alu-demon takes the damage or other effect of the attack normally. She must be aware of the attack and not be flat-footed.
The Beauty of Blood (Ex) A submissive is immune to effects that cause bleeding or wounding (such as a wounding weapon's Constitution damage). Additionally, she has DR 1/piercing or bludgeoning.
Tirelessness (Ex) A submissive gains a +5 morale bonus on saves to resist effects that would cause her to fall asleep or become fatigued.
Vampiric Touch (Su) An alu-demon who successfully hits with a claw attack gains temporary hit points equal to the damage taken by the victim. Damage in excess of what was required to bring a victim to –10 hit points is not gained as temporary hit points by the alu-demon. These temporary hit points vanish in 1 hour.

H2. Empty Displays

What appears to be a man-sized birdcage with flimsy silver bars decorated with delicate golden birds and flowers stands on four slender legs here. The cage doesn't seem to have a door.

These cages are in fact much more solid than they appear, for each is a permanent *forcecage* with a decorative metal shell. The forcecages themselves are solid cubes, and the air inside refreshes as it does elsewhere in Runeforge. No practical way to enter or exit these cubes exists. When a new victim is captured, Delvahine typically renders him unconscious and then has two of her children, carrying the prisoner's body between them, *dimension door* into the cage, leave the prisoner, then *dimension door* back out. Once the trophies are caged, Delvahine can visit them as she wills.

Treasure: The gold and silver cages are worth 1,000 gp each if a method to remove the immobile *forcecage* inside of each can be devised. Each cage weighs 250 pounds.

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H3. Mr. Mutt

The inside of this birdcage contains a shivering man wearing little more than a set of chains and a thick leather collar. A pair of clay bowls occupies one corner and a pile of straw sits in another.

Creatures: A young Thassilonian soldier named Nelevetu Voan earned the enmity of one of the caretakers of the Cathedral of Lust a few weeks before the fall of Thassilon. He was imprisoned here as punishment, and for the last 10,000 years has remained a prisoner. Over those years, Delvahine and her daughters have visited him countless times, to the extent that he's little more than a shuddering animal, energy drained to the brink of death yet unable to die as long as the cathedral keeps him alive. The alu-demons have taken to calling him Mr. Mutt and think of him as their pet.

Nelevetu is a broken shell of a man, and his madness is so profound that he's little more than a toy for the sadistic temptresses now. His reaction to the PCs should they free him should be pitiful and disgusting, perhaps shocking. *Greater restoration* can restore his sanity, but with 10,000 years of memories weighing on him, sanity might be a crueler fate than death. If the PCs cure him of his madness and can soothe his fears with a DC 50 Diplomacy check (or any kind of mental control), they might be able to learn much of Thassilon—he was a soldier in Sorshen's army, but not a very high-ranking one. Refer to the article on Thassilon in *Pathfinder* #1 if the PCs start to question him. You can use Nelevetu to instill in the PCs the gravity of the situation—his tales of the cruelties of the runelords should be enough to convince the PCs that having even one of them return would be a disaster for Varisia.

Nelevetu is a 1st-level human warrior, but only as long as he remains here in the Cathedral of Lust. His life has been preserved by the cathedral's magic, and if he leaves, he immediately crumbles to dust as the years finally claim him.

Nelevetu Voan **CR 1/2**

Male human warrior 1

hp 8

H4. Corpse Cubes

The interior of this cube is thick with the stink of death. A nearly skeletal human corpse lies in the middle of the cell, surrounded by a stain of corruption and ancient rot.

These bodies are all hundreds of years (in a few cases thousands of years) dead, past victims of the succubus whose bodies were left to rot after they died. Each of the four was father to one of the alu-demons, and they treat these cubes with a near-holy respect, averting their gaze from the bones within out of fear that their mother might think they were lusting for them. It is not good to displease the mistress or arouse her jealousy.

H5. Delvahine's Pavilion

This huge pavilion is made of silk sheets of various colors—crimson, lavender, ochre, cobalt blue, and purple. The sides ripple softly, as if a breeze were gently caressing the fabric. The entire structure looks unabashedly glamorous and out of place, yet here and there, splashes of what can only be blood mar its beauty.

This pavilion serves Delvahine as a pleasure palace. She often invites some or all of her children in to assist in her depravities, but just as often relies on the charmed and dominated creatures she's collected from other wings of Runeforge. Her reputation as a dangerous and unpredictable harlot is more than deserved.

The pavilion, contrary to its looks, is not a fragile thing of fabric. The sheets of cloth are fashioned of tough silk harvested from behemoth spiders that dwell in the Outer Rifts of the Abyss. Each of the pavilion walls takes a great deal of effort to push through or break down and is resistant to most physical and energy attacks—bludgeoning and piercing attacks deal no damage at all to them, and they are immune to electricity and cold attacks. Fire deals half damage—only acid and sonic deal normal damage, and even then the not-inconsequential hardness of the fabric applies.

Pavilion Wall

1/2 inch thick

hp 60 per five-foot square; **Hardness** 10; **Break DC** 32

H6. Pavilion Entrance (EL 13)

Numerous thick rugs, cushions, and tasseled pillows cover the floor of this decadent chamber. Strange, exotic scents are in the air, likely coming from several smoldering braziers and censers balanced on elegant silver stands in the corners of the room.

Creatures: A group of long-dominated stone giants stands guard here. Delvahine received them as gifts from Vraxeris thousands of years ago when he first began to approach the succubus with talk of a treaty (see the Shimmering Veils for more information). The stone giants themselves have been Delvahine's slaves for so long that they have no memories of their lives before, or even the concept that they're not the only members of their kind in the world.

Enslaved Stone Giants (5) **CR 8**

hp 119 each (MM 124)

TACTICS

During Combat The stone giants move to bar entrance into the room if anyone enters, and bellow out a warning to their mistress. If she doesn't reply to them telepathically in 1 round to allow the visitors entrance, the giants attack at once.

Morale The giants fight to the death.

Treasure: The four incense burners are minor magical devices that never go out or run out of fuel; they can be commanded to

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emit any number of pleasant and mildly narcotic scents. Each is worth 500 gp.

H7. Mistress Delvahine's Chambers (EL 12)

The air in this room is unusually close—seeming almost to shimmer with pleasant-smelling mist. Pillows, cushions, and throw rugs cover the floor, and four beds sit in the corners of the rooms. Each bed has an iron frame to which numerous ropes and leather straps are attached. A large padded throne sits against the far wall, between two beds, while opposite it in another corner, a tall, spindly censer sits on a low wooden table—it's from here that the faint mist seems to be issuing.



This chamber is Delvahine's personal playground, a place where she can satisfy all of her deviancies and desires. The censer on the darkwood table is part of a trap to weaken the will of those who enter—the unusual magic item's power is tied to the magic of this wing of Runeforge, and if taken from this area, it ceases to function until it is returned. The censer's fumes constantly emit a *mind fog* effect in a 60-foot spread—this room and area **H8** are filled with the mist. Unlike normal *mind fog*, the mist produced by this censer does not affect outsiders. Any other creature who enters the area must make a DC 17 Will save or take a –10 competence penalty on Wisdom checks and Will saves as long as he remains in the mist and for 2d6 rounds thereafter. A moderate wind disperses the mist, but the mist refills the area immediately once the wind passes. The *mind fog* functions at CL 15th.

Creatures: Delvahine spends equal amounts of her time lounging and engaged in all matter of debauchery involving her daughters, the giants, summoned demons, participants called in via *summon monster III*, or just herself. She reacts poorly to interruptions, and if the PCs haven't already made contact with her and secured an audience, she calls out telepathically for aid from any surviving giants or daughters and attacks immediately.

If the PCs have secured an audience with the succubus by mentioning Vraxeris, she's curious to know why he hasn't visited or contacted her in years. If she learns of his death, her mirthful reaction plays to the PCs' favor—her amusement at his failure to keep up with his clones puts her in a good mood. As long as the PCs don't insult her, she agrees to give the PC with the highest Charisma one of her toys for use in the *runeforge pool*—all she asks in payment is that one of the PCs remains with her for a few minutes... alone. She'll also accept payment in jewelry or magic items worth at least 5,000 gp—a better option, since anyone left alone with Delvahine for even a few minutes is in deep trouble. Such characters are typically energy drained to death. If they're lucky.

DELVAHINE **CR 15**

Female succubus bard 6/dominant 5 (MM 47, *Plot & Poison* 66)
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 16, flat-footed 25 (+6 armor, +6 Dexterity, +9 natural)
hp 138 (11d8+6d6+68)
Fort +13, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16
DR 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)
Melee +1 *wounding whip* +22/+17/+12 (1d3+3 plus 1 Con) and claw +15 (1d6+1)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with whip)
Special Attacks agonizing touch, bardic music 6/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, *suggestion*), binding whip, deadly whip, energy drain (DC 26), penetrating whip, *summon demon*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)
At will—*charm monster* (DC 27), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 25), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *suggestion* (DC 26)
Spells Known (CL 11th)
4th (3/day)—*dominate person* (DC 28), *freedom of movement*, *greater invisibility*
3rd (6/day)—*confusion* (DC 28), *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *summon monster III*
2nd (6/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 25), *cure moderate wounds*, *eagle's splendor*, *mirror image*
1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 25), *cure light wounds*, *grease* (DC 24), *hideous laughter* (DC 25)
0 (3/day)—*ghost sound* (DC 23), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

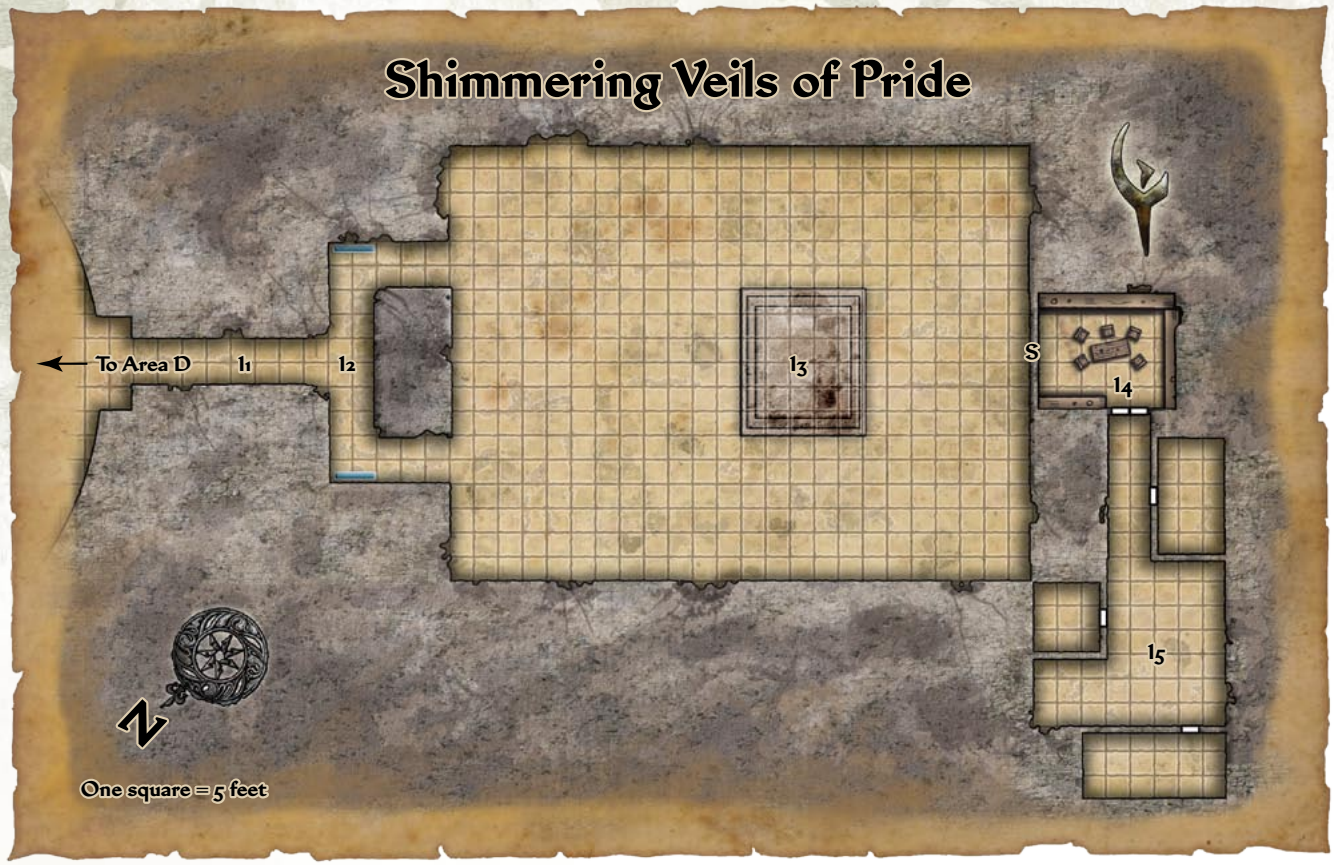
TACTICS

Before Combat Delvahine is unlikely to be caught off-guard by the PCs, since her daughters keep in telepathic contact with her. Once she knows the PCs are approaching (either at her permission or otherwise) she casts *freedom of movement*, *eagle's splendor*, and *mirror image*.

During Combat Delvahine prefers to fight with allies, particularly her submissive daughters, who are well-trained at protecting her. She uses her bardic music to inspire courage on the first round of combat, then moves on to use *dominate person* and *confusion*

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against her foes. If forced to fight in melee, she hovers out of reach and strikes at foes with her cruel, barbed whip.

Morale Delvahine teleports to area **13** if brought below 20 hit points—as distasteful as it is to her, she hopes to seek aid from Vraxeris. When she discovers he is dead and only his simulacra remains, she assumes his form, allies with his simulacra, and awaits the PCs.

Base Stats Without her preparatory spells, Delvahine's Charisma drops to 32.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 22, **Con** 18, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 36

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +15

Feats Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Hover, Impressive Demonstration, Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (whip)

Skills Bluff +34, Concentration +25, Diplomacy +27, Escape Artist +22, Heal +8, Hide +16, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Listen +30, Move Silently +16, Perform (dance) +29, Spot +30, Use Rope +12

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft., *tongues*

SQ bardic knowledge +9, change shape, enchantment specialization

Gear *+2 glamered mithral shirt, +1 wounding whip, amulet of health +4, gloves of Dexterity +4*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Agonizing Touch (Su) Delvahine can cause pain in a foe by making a touch attack, as part of a successful grapple check, or with any spell delivered by touch. The foe takes 1d3 points of nonlethal damage when so touched—Delvahine cannot add her Strength bonus to this damage. The target may make a DC 28 Fortitude save to negate this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Binding Whip (Ex) Delvahine can attempt to bind a Large or smaller foe within 5 feet with her whip by making a melee touch attack. If successful, she attempts to make a DC 15 Use Rope check as a free action; on a success, the foe is entangled and she can no longer use the whip to attack. An entangled foe takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty to his Dexterity. A DC 25 Strength check or an Escape Artist check opposed by her Use Rope check frees the creature. Attempts to cast spells while entangled require the caster to make a Concentration check.

Change Shape (Su) Delvahine can assume the form of any Small or Medium humanoid.

Deadly Whip (Ex) When Delvahine attacks a foe with a whip, she may choose to deal normal damage with it rather than nonlethal damage. She does not provoke attacks of opportunity when she uses a whip in combat.

Enchantment Specialization (Ex) Delvahine is particularly adept at casting *confusion*. The spell save DC for this spell is increased by 1, and she gains a +1 competence bonus on level checks to overcome spell resistance with it.

Impressive Demonstration (Ex) Delvahine can use Intimidate to demoralize an opponent as a move action rather than as a standard action. This feat is from *Plot & Poison*, page 93.

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Penetrating Whip (Ex) When attacking with a whip, Delvahine ignores the restriction on being able to only damage creatures with a +1 natural armor bonus or +3 armor bonus or less—she can damage foes of any armor level with her whip.

Treasure: Hidden under the southernmost bed (Search DC 20) is a *handy haversack* that contains a *tome of understanding +1*, six *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of remove disease*, and a *potion of remove paralysis*.

A drawer in the table contains a dozen exotic, bejeweled toys and devices that Delvahine uses in her frequent debauches. The functions of these devices isn't always clear at first glance. As a collection, they are worth 2,400 gp, but few merchants would publicly admit to an interest in purchasing them. In any event, any one of these toys works as a component for a *runeforged weapon*.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to get a *runeforged weapon* component from Delvahine without sacrificing one of their own or starting a fight, grant them XP as if they had defeated Delvahine in battle.

H8. The Sisters' Repose

This smoky chamber has no furniture, but mounds of blankets, cushions, pillows, and sheets lie heaped on the floor, in some places built into what look to be nests.

Treasure: This room is where Delvahine's daughters rest or entertain each other or their guests. They generally keep no valuables in this room, but a DC 30 Search of the mounds of blankets turns up a jade ring dropped centuries ago by one of their playthings. The ring is worth 400 gp.

PART EIGHT: THE SHIMMERING VEILS

Although the Vaults of Greed are more decadent, and the Iron Cages more deviant, the Shimmering Veils of Runeforge housed the wizards who took the greatest pride in their roles here. Their leader, Vraxeris, was hand-picked by Runelord Xanderghul, and his apprentices were the most loyal of all in Runeforge. Although all seven wings worked together and, in theory, were equal, in time it became apparent that Vraxeris and his illusionists were the best suited to leadership and innovation.

As a result, in the thousands of years after Thassilon fell, Vraxeris was the only one of the original runelord apprentices to survive. In other wings, apprentices like Ordikon or Kazaven inherited control, or minions like Delvahine or Athroxis took command. In the Shimmering Veils, Vraxeris retained control. Even after his apprentices died of old age, he remained, for Vraxeris had mastered the art of creating clones. Yet Vraxeris's skill at cloning himself went beyond even what the spell itself allowed, for each time he aged and died, he was reborn in a fresh, young body. As long as he could maintain his studies and experience (since each clone resulted in a loss of an experience level), Vraxeris was effectively immortal. He hid the secret of his more powerful *clone* spell jealously, and for nearly 10,000 years he maintained his control here.

It took the awakening of the *runeforge well* to disrupt this cycle. Vraxeris aided the others in defeating the Abjurant Halls, then turned his considerable mind to the question of why the well had awakened. It didn't take him long to determine that Karzoug was the source. Enraged that it wasn't his lord, Xanderghul, who was wakening, Vraxeris began to research a method by which he could escape Runeforge and defeat Karzoug before he had fully emerged back into the world. With Karzoug's wealth and power, Vraxeris could then awaken his own master with ease.

Vraxeris was nearing the solution for these conundrums when tragedy struck. Always before, he had managed to accumulate enough power to create a new clone before his current body perished. Yet in his efforts to create a portal out of Runeforge, he delayed his advancement just enough that when he was seized with a sudden, unexpected recurrence of the same hereditary dementia responsible for the majority of his previous deaths, he was unprepared. In this growing dementia, he lost the ability to tell the difference between reality and his own illusions. He locked himself in his bedchambers and spent nearly every day clothing himself in illusions of beauty, and staring at himself in his mirror. Eventually, as he had countless times before, the dementia in his brain spread deeper, and as he sat in front of his mirror bedecked in kingly raiment believing that he was a god, he quietly passed away when the basic lifegiving functions of his brain failed. Yet this time, there was no clone waiting to return his soul to life.

This part of the vault is a grand cathedral decorated with peacock motifs and massive chandeliers hanging from the ceiling to brightly illuminate it with hundreds of *continual flames*. The flagstones are made of smooth white marble. All of the walls are covered in floor to ceiling mirrors. This wing otherwise conforms to the standard Runeforge features.

I1. Entrance to the Shimmering Veils

When the PCs successfully enter the Shimmering Veils, the walls ripple and fade as if they were but illusions, revealing a T-shaped junction ahead.

I2. Reflected Enmity (EL 14)

This brightly lit corridor is lined with floor-to-ceiling mirrors. The corridor appears to end in more mirrors. The reflections give the dizzying impression that the corridor opens up to each side, extending infinitely into the distance.

Trap: Although most of the mirrors in this hallway are not magic, two mirrors at either end of the junction are *mirrors of opposition* built into the walls. Any character coming between them who turns to face his reflection in one also sees his reflection in the other, triggering two exact duplicates of that PC to attack

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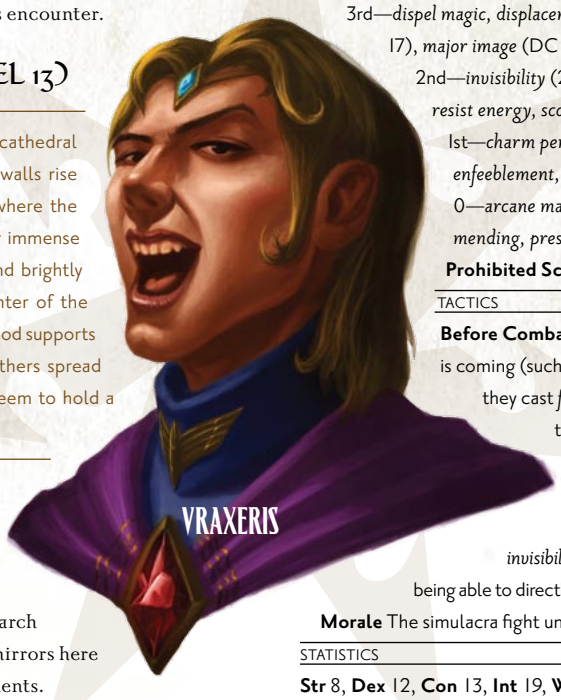
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him. The same thing happens up to three more times each time a PC sees his reflection. The *mirrors of opposition* are not portable magic items, unfortunately—their construction depends as much upon Runeforge's magical properties as anything else.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant a CR 14 experience award for the successful completion of this encounter.

13. The Peacock Shrine (EL 13)

The corridor opens into an immense cathedral of polished ivory flagstones. Mirrored walls rise to a height of nearly a hundred feet, where the vaulted ceiling arches majestically. Four immense chandeliers hang from golden chains and brightly illuminate the entire room. At the center of the cathedral, a four-step dais of polished wood supports a peacock the size of a wyvern, its feathers spread regally behind it. The creature's eyes seem to hold a great depth of wisdom and intelligence.



The peacock is nothing more than a heightened *permanent image* (Will DC 23 to disbelieve). A secret door behind a section of mirrors in the far wall may be located with a DC 30 Search check. Fragments of any of the wall mirrors here function as *runeforged weapon* components.

Creatures: Before he moved on to perfecting and improving the *clone* spell, Vraxeris experimented often with *simulacrum*. Today, only four of these simulacra remain. Without the capacity to grow more powerful or the drive to improve themselves, these effectively immortal duplicates were used by the real Vraxeris as assistants. Now that Vraxeris is dead, the four simulacra continue to carry out his last orders: to keep anyone from disrupting his studies in area **I4**. Each simulacrum is identical: an immaculately dressed human man with shoulder-length blond hair, rich robes, and a cloak of peacock feathers. When they detect intruders, they speak with one sonorous voice in Thassilonian: "The master is in study—he is not to be disturbed. Please keep your screaming to a minimum while you are punished for daring to venture this close to his magnificence."

Simulacrum of Vraxeris the Illusionist (4) CR 9

Male simulacrum human wizard (illusionist) 9
NE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15
(+1 deflection, +1 Dexterity, +4 shield)
hp 47 (9d4+23)
Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)
Spells Prepared (CL 7th, +6 ranged touch)
5th—*feeblemind* (DC 19), empowered *fireball* (DC 17), *shadow evocation* (DC 21)
4th—*confusion* (DC 18), *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 20), empowered *scorching ray*
3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, extended *false life*, *fireball* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 19)
2nd—*invisibility* (2), *minor image* (DC 18), *mirror image*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*
1st—*charm person* (DC 15), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *silent image* (DC 17)
0—*arcane mark*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*
Prohibited Schools conjuration, transmutation

TACTICS

Before Combat If the simulacra suspect trouble is coming (such as if they hear combat in area **I1**, they cast *false life*, *invisibility*, and *shield* on themselves.

During Combat The simulacra know they won't last long in melee, and therefore do their best to rely on *invisibility* and ranged spells to keep foes from being able to directly engage them with ease.

Morale The simulacra fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 13, **Int** 19, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3
Feats Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion)
Skills Concentration +14, Decipher Script +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +11, Knowledge (religion) +17, Spellcraft +19
Languages Draconic, Giant, Thassilonian
SQ summon familiar (none currently)
Gear masterwork dagger, *headband of intellect +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *ring of protection +1*, noble's outfit worth 200 gp, spellbook (contains only spells prepared)

14. Meditation Room

This cozy chamber has a strange musty stink about it. Bookcases full of tomes and scrolls line its walls and a reading table with several matching chairs sits atop a thick rug in its center. A gold peacock on the table holds a single stick of incense cleverly positioned in its tail feathers. A heavy wooden door exits the room through the wall to the northwest. The musty stink certainly comes from the body slumped in the chair in the far corner—the body of a man wearing rich robes and a cloak made of peacock feathers. An open book sits in the body's lap, and a quill made from a crimson feather rests in the body's skeletal hand.

This room is filled with religious essays on the subject of the Peacock Spirit, one of the more popular faiths during Thassilon's height. Notes on this mysterious faith can be

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Handout 1

Excerpts from Vraxeris's Journal:

"The runeforge pool awoke! I first took this as a sign that Runelord Xanderghul had risen. When I arrived at the pool to investigate, it seemed that the others had come to the same conclusion. The foolish Wardens of Envy thought to disrupt the recrudescence, and with the aid of Kazaven, Ordikan, Athroxis, and that lovely creature Delvahine, we were able to defeat them utterly. Their Abjurant Halls lie in ruins. Our treaty was short-lived, though. Kazaven absconded with the bodies and that treacherous wench Athroxis nearly burned me to death before I made it back here."

"I was mistaken. Runelord Xanderghul still slumbers. It is that monster Karzoug who quickens and nears rebirth. Damnation! He must not be allowed to precede Xanderghul into the world, for he would rebuild Thassilon in his own inferior image, a testament to his own greed rather than one of pride in the work. He must be delayed or defeated!"

"I have managed to escape this place, to a certain extent. By astral projection I can explore what the world outside has become. It is a brutish place, yet it pleases me to see Thassilon's mark endures in the shape of our monuments. Still, the wilderness of the world vexes me. Gone is the empire I knew. Karzoug's city of Xin-Shalast is now hidden high in the mountains, and when I finally discovered it, I found the spires where his body is hidden to be inaccessible, warded against astral travelers by the occlusion field around the peak of Mhar-Massif. As long as his runewell is active, I fear even a physical approach would be impossibly deadly. I must determine a way to pierce these wardings, and to send an agent in my place. No need to risk my own life before my clone is ready."

Handout 2

Excerpts from Vraxeris's Journal:

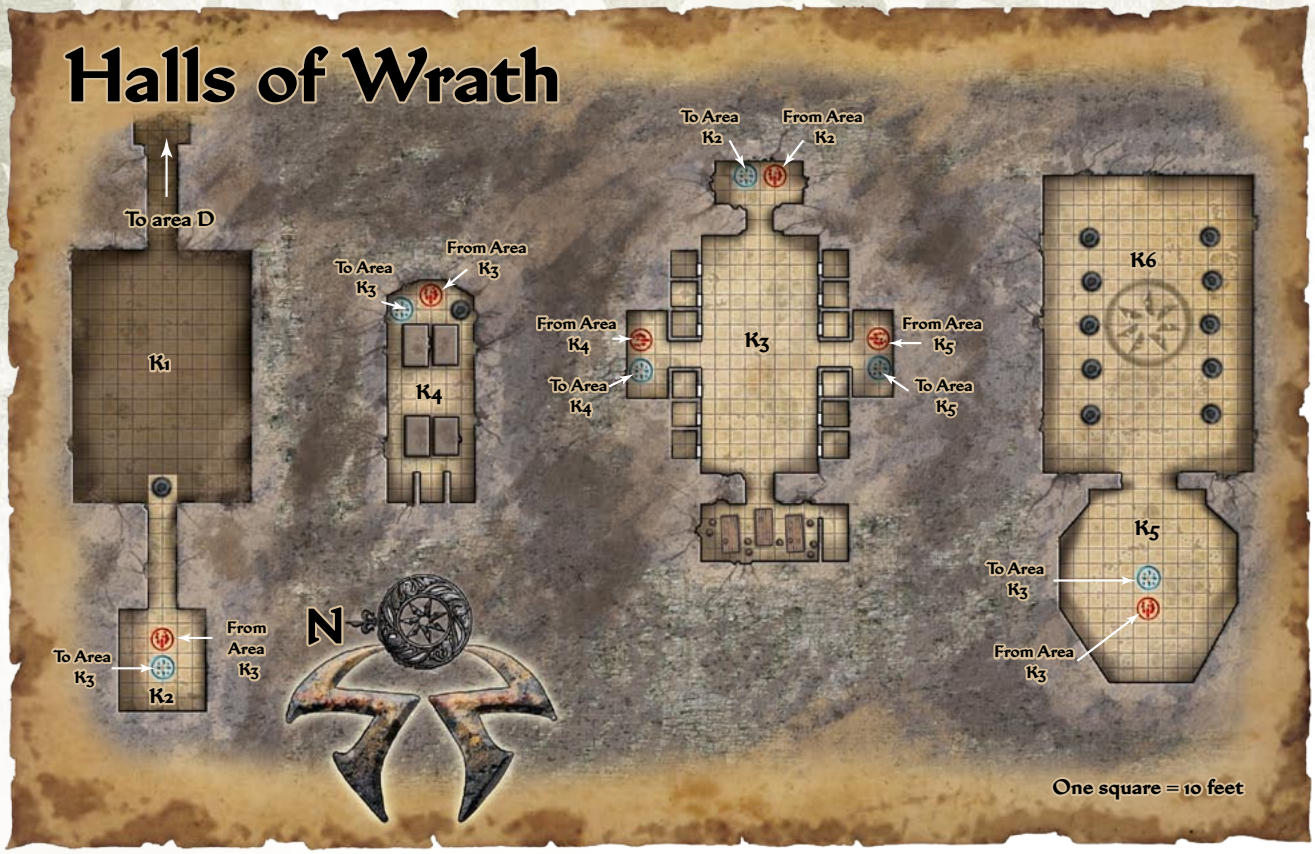
"I have taken steps toward an alliance with Delvahine. She may be able to escape this place, for she was not of the original blood. At the least, she can call upon agents from outside, and perhaps through them we can secure servants in the outer world. She seems uninterested in Sorshen's return; all the better for Xanderghul, that."

"The runeforge pool is the key. As I suspected, the occlusion field around Karzoug's fortress in Xin-Shalast has a flaw. His lack of knowledge of the intricacies of Sorshen's and my own lord Xanderghul's powers have left an opening. My agents must use components infused with our lords' virtues, extract the latent magic within these components, and then anoint their chosen weapons with this raw power. The runeforged pool seems to have enough reserves to enhance no more than half a dozen or so runeforged weapons, but those enhanced with enchantment and illusion magic will be most potent against Karzoug's defenses. They may even be pivotal in his defeat. For my own part, fragments of any of the mirrors in the Peacock's Hall should suffice for a component. Delvahine's... equipment... should suffice for enchantment, although one might be wise to cleanse them before they are handled."

"The search for an agent goes poorly. Delvahine seems more interested in her own lusts than aiding me. Worse, the lapses and fevers are increasing. I fear that I will be forced to see to Karzoug myself, in which event I will need to use the master circle I built into the Halls of Wrath to escape this place. Yet first, I must set aside my work on delaying Karzoug's return and turn back to the final development of my 205th clone. I only hope I have time to finish before the dementia takes hold..."

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found in *Pathfinder* #1, page 78—the books kept here are maddeningly vague and coy in revealing actual details about the Peacock Spirit, made all the worse by the large volume of material at hand.

The body in the chair has been dead for well over two years—it is the remains of Vraxeris himself, the one-time ruler of this realm, now nothing more than a collection of bones in a chair. The book in his lap is an extensive journal written in Draconic. Reading the journal takes a day of study, although a character who skims the journal and makes a DC 25 Decipher Script check can glean the important entries relating to Runeforge and relatively recent events.

The bulk of the journal catalogs Vraxeris's studies and the development of an improved version of *clone* that effectively granted him immortality. The drawback was that each time he switched bodies, he lost a huge portion of his own knowledge and experience, forcing himself to relearn much with each incarnation. At several points in the book, he also speaks of how with each clone the debilitating dementia that lurks at the end of his life manifests a little sooner—with each new body, his effective lifespan shrank. It seems obvious that the dementia finally struck soon enough to prevent him from creating a new clone, and thus finally, death claimed him. A wizard could use the journal to rebuild Vraxeris's version of *improved clone*, but the research for creating this powerful 9th-level spell is particularly onerous and would itself consume most of a lifetime. Nevertheless, the journal is worth 15,000 gp for this information alone, and if word of its contents were to spread, all manner of unscrupulous wizards would doubtless do much to claim it by more violent means.

Of more immediate interest to the PCs are the journal's notes on more recent events. These key excerpts are reproduced on page 47 as Player Handouts 1 and 2.

Treasure: The golden peacock is worth 800 gp. The collection of books weighs just over 200 pounds in all, but as a collection is worth 1,500 gp to a scholar of Thassilonian religion. Vraxeris's spellbooks sit on the shelves to the north, and contain a wealth of spells between their covers, including all of the wizard illusion spells in the PH—there are no conjuration or transmutation spells in these books.

The gear remaining on Vraxeris's body is worth a small fortune. He wears an evil *robe of the archmagi*, a *headband of intellect +6*, a *ring of protection +2*, and a *cape of the mountebank*.

15. Empty Chambers

This wing of chambers once held all manner of opulence and decadence—yet all were but illusions maintained at Vraxeris's whim. With his final death, the contents of these chambers vanished as well, leaving emptiness behind. The rooms themselves still radiate faint illusion magic, but there is little else of value to be found here today.

Of somewhat morbid interest, the smallest of these rooms contains a huge pile of more than 200 skeletons—the remains of Vraxeris's clones over the past several thousand years.

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PART NINE: THE FESTERING MAZE

This area was once a maze of pools—for meditating, reflecting, bathing, and just soaking in—divans, padded benches, and soft beds where the virtue of rest was pursued. It was a reward for the favorites of Krune, the Runelord of Sloth and ruler of Haruka. Of course, the virtue of rest became corrupted like all of the others, degenerating into the basest form of indolence. What could have been a beautiful haven here instead became a collection of cesspools surrounded by staggering piles of filth and refuse.

The lords of sloth were the first to succumb in the centuries after the fall of Thassilon—none of this wing's masters survived more than a decade, in fact. This maze of chambers has since been slowly collapsing and decaying into a tangle of caverns and dripping pools of filth. Members of the other Runeforge wings have taken to calling the place the Festering Maze and using it as a farm of sorts for creatures to experiment on. Journeys into the Festering Maze must be made with proper protection, as the air in this maze functions as a combination of *cloudkill* and *acid fog*—these effects cannot be dispelled but can be temporarily dispersed with wind effects.

The Festering Maze of Sloth is a labyrinth of disease-ridden garbage and filth. There is little to be found in these chambers apart from poison, corrosive fog, and low-CR and mindless creatures like oozes, slimes, and vermin. What few items of value lost in these caves have long since been looted by other creatures in Runeforge and added to their collections. You can certainly expand this section of Runeforge as you see fit to provide PCs with further challenges, but there's little here for them as written.

Any vial of liquid harvested from the foul-smelling puddles of waste on the floors of the Festering Maze works as a component for *runeforged weapons*. One need only travel to the edge of the maze to reach such puddles.

PART TEN: THE HALLS OF WRATH

Runelord Alaznist tasked her finest (and most destructive) wizards and knights with the care of the Halls of Wrath. To aid them, she gave them the secret of creating the horrific soldiers known as sinspawn, and with that knowledge, the key to fleshwarping. Unfortunately, the wizards of wrath did not take well to working together. After the wardens of sloth perished, these wizards were next. Yet where the wardens of sloth left behind none who could carry on their work, several apprentices remained in the Halls of Wrath. As the centuries wore on, though, these heirs grew less interested in developing new magic and more interested in maintaining their own brutal society of warfare and training. The inhabitants of the Halls of Wrath have prepared endlessly for Runelord Alaznist's return, yet have made no attempt to hasten that event. The sinspawn are used for training human soldiers, who themselves have developed a closed but highly successful society. Hundreds of generations have passed, each led by a new highlord or highlady ascended from their own ranks. The current leader of these halls is a brutal woman named Athroxis, and the PCs are destined to give her what she's longed for her entire life—a chance to test the training of her soldiers against true invaders.

The Halls of Wrath are made up of several isolated chambers attached to each other via permanent teleportation circles—gifts from Vraxeris before Thassilon fell. None in the Halls of Wrath could hope to understand or duplicate these feats, so close-minded are they to conjuration magic, yet they value these teleportation circles beyond all else, since the circles' destruction would isolate them forever and turn their homes into tombs.

Teleportation Circles: Each of these measures 10 feet in diameter and is represented by a complex rune carved into the ground surrounded by a deep circular groove. Up to four Medium creatures may enter a teleportation circle at once. Those who do are immediately teleported to the destination keyed to it: always a specific circle with the rune of wrath engraved in the ground within it. The teleportation circles are one-way only.

K1. Iron Guardian (EL 13)

A wide corridor of polished marble opens into a brightly lit and extremely tall chamber. The upper portion of the far wall is entirely covered in a mural of an armored woman with crimson hair holding a burning ranseur and riding on the back of a massive red dragon. A square outcropping of smooth marble juts out from the far wall, rising from the floor to a height of thirty feet. An opening in the wall directly behind the flat top of the stone column leads deeper into this section of the vault. A twelve-foot-tall iron statue stands on this platform, an enormous iron bow gripped in its metal fists and a strange rune that looks almost like a pair of fangs decorating its chest.

This immense hall was used to receive visitors to the Halls of Wrath—those who were turned away were executed by the room's guardian if they didn't immediately leave. The marble surfaces of this chamber are too smooth to climb without magic—when a visitor was granted an audience, the room's guardian was commanded to carry the visitor up to area **K2**.

Creature: As many PCs will doubtless suspect, the iron statue is a golem. What they might not expect is that this iron golem is a variant capable not only of making devastating ranged attacks, but of flight as well.

When the iron archer detects intruders, it sounds a thunderous alarm that can be heard throughout Runeforge—a metallic clanking that vibrates the stones. This alarm is easily enough to alert all of the denizens of the Halls of Wrath—Highlady Athroxis uses her *wand of clairaudience/clairvoyance* to observe the battle in this room.

Iron Archer **CR 13**

Variant iron golem (MM 136)

N Large construct

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see invisibility; Listen +0, Spot +0

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DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 30
(–1 Dexterity, +22 natural, –1 size)
hp 129 (18d10+30)
Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6
DR 15/adamantine; **Immune** magic; construct traits

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)
Melee 2 slams +23 (2d10+11)
Ranged arrows of wrath +10/+5/+0 touch (3d6)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The iron archer fires its bow at the nearest creature or at random trespassers. It focuses its attacks on opponents who get past it into the corridor to the exclusion of all others, until the creature is dead or flees. If no opponent gets past it, the iron archer focuses on flying foes. The golem does not gain bonuses for being a sinner, as detailed on page 24.
Morale The iron archer fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +28

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arrows of Wrath (Su) When the iron archer attacks with its bow, it fires arrow-shaped bolts of energy. These arrows deal 3d6 points of damage on a hit. On the first round of combat, these arrows deal fire damage. On the second round, they deal electricity damage. On the third they deal cold damage. On the fourth round, they switch back to fire and the cycle repeats. If the iron archer ceases to use its arrows (to make a melee attack, for example), the cycle restarts with fire arrows the next time it fires.
Flight (Su) The iron archer's supernatural flight cannot be dispelled.
See Invisibility (Su) The iron archer can see invisibility, as the spell. This effect cannot be dispelled.

K2. Teleport Room

Two engraved circles in the ground surround large runes in their center. The one to the east is red, while the one to the west is blue.

These are teleportation circles. The eastern circle is the arrival point from area **K3**, while the western one is the departure circle to area **K3**.

K3. Barracks and Training Hall (CL 14)

This long chamber is filled with practice dummies dressed in battered and scorched suits of armor and a few contraptions bearing sharp implements. Several doors and two open corridors exit the chamber along each side wall. An opening in the opposite wall leads to what appears to be a meeting hall.

Several *continual flames* on the walls provide light for this chamber, which is the primary training hall for the denizens of the Halls of Wrath. No matter how battered the training dummies get, the room itself repairs them every 24 hours so they're good to go for the next day's work. Despite the fact that the warriors stationed here need not eat or sleep, their training demands they take time to do so. This prevents them from falling into habits that could be problems once the call for war is heard and they must return to Golarion. Each of the twenty-foot-square side rooms contains bunks for humans to the south, sinspawn to the north.

Creatures: After the first few generations of warriors of wrath grew too inbred, steps were taken to ensure that only the most desirable traits were passed on to the children of this insular community. Using the fleshwarping labs (area **K4**) to aid in the shaping of both human and sinspawn offspring alike, the denizens have even regulated the cycle of birth and death in the Halls of Wrath. Each generation of soldier is allowed to breed at age 24, and then when they reach the age of 44, a new Highlord is selected and the older generation is sent to the flesh forges for transformation into sinspawn. Fortunately for the PCs, the recent war with the Abjurant Halls resulted in the deaths of many of the warriors here. Their numbers depleted, and having not yet reached the age where they are traditionally capable of reproducing themselves, several warriors of wrath now toil in the fleshwarping labs, seeking a way to reverse the sinspawn transformation in hopes of reclaiming lost numbers. As a result, only six warriors of wrath and six sinspawn are here to stand against the PCs.

As combat begins here, Highlady Athroxis observes via her *wand of clairaudiance/clairvoyance*.

Warriors of Wrath (6) CR 7

Human evoker 5/fighter 1/eldritch knight 1
LE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
(+6 armor, +1 Dex)
hp 37 (5d4+1d10+1d6+14)
Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *greatsword* +9 (2d6+4/19–20)
Spells Prepared (CL 5th; 10% spell failure chance, +6 ranged touch)
3rd—*displacement*, *fireball* (DC 19), *haste*
2nd—*bull's strength*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *shatter* (DC 18)
1st—*burning hands* (DC 17), *magic missile* (2), *shocking grasp*, *true strike*
0—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *flare* (DC 16), *light*, *ray of frost*
Prohibited Schools conjuration, abjuration

TACTICS

During Combat The warriors of wrath allow the sinspawn to initially engage the PCs, giving themselves time to cast *bull's strength*, *mirror image*, *haste*, and *displacement*. They step in to replace fallen sinspawn on a one-for-one basis, using spells like *fireball* and *scorching ray* to hit PCs who hang back from the melee.
Morale The warriors of wrath fight to the death.

STATISTICS

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Str 14, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6
Feats Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Weapon Focus (greatsword)
Skills Concentration +13, Craft (armorsmith or weaponsmith) +12, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +12, Spellcraft +15
Languages Draconic, Giant, Thassilonian
SQ summon familiar (none currently)
Gear *+2 mithral chain shirt, +1 greatsword,* spellbook (contains prepared spells only)

Sinspawn Axeman (6) — CR 7

Sinspawn fighter 5 (*Pathfinder* #1 90)
NE Medium aberration
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent sin; Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19
(+7 armor, +3 Dexterity, +2 natural)
hp 76 (3d8+5d10+35); fast healing 1
Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7
Immune mind-affecting; **SR** 16

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.
Melee *+1 greataxe* +12/+7 (1d12+13/×3) and bite +8 (1d6+4 plus wrathful bite)

TACTICS

During Combat The sinspawn move to intercept intruders and prevent anyone from engaging the warriors of wrath for as long as they can hold the line. They attack with 3-point Power Attacks (included in the attack statistics above).
Morale The sinspawn fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9
Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)
Skills Hide +4, Intimidate +7, Move Silently +10
Languages Thassilonian
SQ martial proficiency
Gear *+2 breastplate, +1 greataxe*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Martial Proficiency (Ex) A sinspawn is proficient in all simple and all martial weapons, and in all forms of armor and shields except tower shields.
Scent Sin (Su) A sinspawn has the scent ability, but only against extraordinarily wrathful creatures. This includes any creature under the effects of a barbarian rage or similar effect, a creature with the evil subtype, a creature under the effects of the sinspawn's wrathful bite, or a creature (GM's discretion) that is excessively wrathful.
Wrathful Bite (Su) A creature bitten by a sinspawn must make a DC 12 Will save or become overwhelmed by feelings of wrath, anger, and rage. These emotions are so powerful that the affected creature finds it hard to do anything but rage impotently. For 1d6 minutes after succumbing to a sinspawn's wrathful bite, the victim is sickened. A victim suffering from this effect who is bitten again by a sinspawn must make a DC 12 Will save or the wrath increases, leaving him staggered and thus able to take only a single move action or standard action each round (but not both, nor can he take full-round actions). Further bites increase the duration of the effect, but not the magnitude. The save DC is Charisma-based.

K4. Fleshwarping Lab (EL 13)

This long chamber is filled with two rows of wide worktables. The far end of the chamber contains three wide alcoves. The ones to the left and right are each filled with all matter of alchemical supplies and large barrels, while the one in the middle contains a single huge vat of what appears to be twitching, foul-smelling flesh.

This chamber is where the Lords of Wrath forge magical weapons and armor, and also where they transform older generations into sinspawn and engineer the proper growth of their own children.

The vat of bubbling flesh in the central alcove is a semi-living mass of protoflesh—the raw



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building material for growing sinspawn and a key component of much of the work done here to keep the generations of wrath from descending into deformity and madness. The stuff smells foul, and if eaten is mildly toxic (Fortitude DC 13 resists, 1d3 Str/1d3 Str), but is otherwise harmless.

Creature: This room is currently occupied by nine warriors of wrath, all toiling diligently on a complex problem—a method to revert a sinspawn back into its human source. The answer is still a long way off for the increasingly frustrated warriors of wrath, who take to any interruptions with welcome and sadistic glee. They fight to the death to protect this laboratory.

Warriors of Wrath (9) **CR 7**

hp 37 each (see page 50)

K5. Chamber of Readiness

The polished granite walls of this large chamber are covered in spidery glyphs. The ceiling rises to a height of twenty-five feet, where a mural depicts a long-haired woman holding a flaming ranseur standing atop a burning tower of stone. Swords and ranseurs rest inside shallow depressions in the walls, glowing faintly to illuminate the chamber. The far side of the room is a solid wall of billowing black smoke.

This room is where initiates who wish to test themselves and make the attempt to become a new highlord or lady of wrath prepare themselves for the grueling combat that awaits them beyond the veil of smoke at the far side of the chamber. To advance, they need only defeat the current highlord or highlady.

A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check or *read magic* spell determines that the glyphs on the walls represent various forms of evocation magic, particularly those involving fire or the creation of magic weapons.

The wall of smoke separating this room from area **K6** is a variant form of *illusory wall* (CL 15th, Will DC 17).

Treasure: The weapons embedded in the walls include two *+1 greatswords*, two *+1 ranseurs*, and two *+1 longswords*. Each of them glows continuously, providing light equal to a torch. The weapons may be removed with a *stone shape* spell or by physically digging them out.

K6. Hall of Testing (EL 16)

A wide avenue flanked by crimson stone pillars runs down the center of this chamber—the ceiling arches sixty feet above and seems to be made of fire. At the center of the room, a huge seven-pointed star made of silver is engraved into the floor and surrounded by a circle of low-burning flames.



This enormous chamber serves as a training ground for the current highlord or highady of wrath and as an arena for the testing of new applicants. The fire burning on the ceiling is quite real—treat it as a permanent *wall of fire* covering the extent of the room. Burning objects lit in fire from this source function as the component for *runeforged weapons*.

The Sihedron Rune in the middle of the room is in fact an immense portal—this is the "master circle" that Vraxeris wrote about in his journal. The master circle has two functions, but Highlady Athroxis can only activate the first of them.

Calling: Once per day, the master circle can be commanded to call a single creature, functioning as a *greater planar binding* spell (CL 18th).

Travel: If any teleportation effect is used while the caster is standing within the circle, the teleportation energy is instead absorbed by the master circle, which then opens a *gate* to the center of the Sihedron Circle on the lower slopes of Rimeskull. The gate is a two-way portal, and remains open for one hour before closing.

Creatures: Highlady Athroxis awaits the PCs here, likely having already watched them in battle several times with her magic wand. She has little in the way of social graces, and when the PCs enter the room she attacks at once. Unfortunately for the PCs, Athroxis is not alone—she is accompanied by a demon she called up from the Abyss (using the room's Sihedron Rune portal) to serve as a guardian.

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Highlady Athroxis — CR 15

Female human fighter 2/evoker 5/eldritch knight 8
LE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 24
(+9 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 insight, +2 natural)
hp 101 (15 HD; 2d10+5d4+8d6+45)
Fort +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)
Melee +3 *adamantine flaming ranseur* +21/+16/+11 (2d4+8/19–20 plus 1d6 fire)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with ranseur)
Spells Prepared (CL 12th, +17 melee touch, +16 ranged touch; 15% spell failure chance)
6th—*chain lightning* (2, DC 23), still *cone of cold* (DC 22)
5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), maximized *scorching ray*, empowered *vampiric touch*, *wall of force*
4th—still *fireball* (DC 20), still empowered *magic missile* (2), empowered *scorching ray*, *shout* (DC 21)
3rd—*fly*, *greater magic weapon* (already cast), *haste*, *keen edge* (already cast), *lightning bolt* (DC 20), empowered *magic missile*
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *false life*, still *magic missile* (2), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*
1st—*magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement*, *shocking grasp*, *true strike* (2)
0—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 17), *ray of frost* (2), *read magic*
Prohibited Schools abjuration and conjuration

TACTICS

Before Combat Athroxis casts *greater magic weapon* and *keen edge* on her ranseur daily, and *false life* on herself. When she sees the PCs reach area **K3**, she casts *fly* and *mirror image* on herself as well.
During Combat Athroxis casts *haste* immediately before combat begins, and then uses her *cone of cold* spells. She favors spells like *blindness/deafness* and her still spells, since they aren't impacted by her spell failure chance. When she engages in melee, she puts 5 points from her melee attacks into Combat Expertise.
Morale Athroxis fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 19, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +15
Feats Combat Expertise, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Still Spell, Weapon Focus (ranseur)
Skills Climb +8, Concentration +21, Craft (weaponsmith) +10, Intimidate +5, Jump +17, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +25, Swim +7
Languages Draconic, Infernal, Thassilonian
SQ mark of wrath, summon familiar (none currently)

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Combat Gear *wand of lightning bolt* (10th, 25 charges), *wand of clairvoyance/clairaudience* (32 charges); **Other Gear** *+4 mithral breastplate, +1 flaming ranseur, amulet of natural armor +2, belt of giant strength +2, gloves of Dexterity +2, headband of intellect +2, ring of protection +2, ring of resistance +3* (as *cloak of resistance +3*), spell component pouch, spellbook

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mark of Wrath (Su) Highlady Athroxis wears the mark of her rulership on her flesh—a faintly glowing tattoo-like rune on her forehead that moves through the generations from one ruler to the next. The *mark of wrath* provides her with a +1 insight bonus to AC and on attack and damage rolls. Once per day as a swift action, she can call upon the mark to protect her with a *fire shield* (CL 15th). If she is slain in combat, the mark of wrath transfers to the brow of her defeater. It can only be transferred again on that character's death at the hands of another, but can be removed with a successful *break enchantment* against CL 20th. Once removed in this manner, it vanishes forever.

Shemhazian Demon **CR 14**

hp 200 (see page 86)

TACTICS

During Combat The shemhazian demon follows Highlady Athroxis's commands when she gives them, serving as a bodyguard and helping to prevent foes from flanking her. As it was called, it can use its summon demons ability, doing so on the first round to summon some vrocks.

Morale The shemhazian fights to the death.

PART ELEVEN: WEAPONS OF POWER

Once the PCs reach Runeforge, the adventure doesn't immediately tell them what to seek out and accomplish, but their true goal should eventually be to create *runeforged weapons* from the pool in area **D**. The most likely place they can learn about these weapons is from Vraxeris's journals, but you can just as easily drop hints that the central pool can be used to craft weapons if the PCs charm powerful NPCs or cast *legend lore* on the *runeforge pool* itself. The point isn't to hide this information from the PCs, but to reward them when they make the appropriate discoveries or cast the right spells.

In order to infuse a weapon with power from the pool and transform it into a *runeforged weapon*, a character must gather components that have themselves been infused with magic over the past several centuries. Not any component will do—these must be items that are themselves icons of sin. Each of these items detects as very faint magic of the appropriate school, and when brought within 10 feet of the *runeforge pool*, these items glow brightly and seem to buzz with energy.

Before the pool can enhance a weapon, two runeforge components must be immersed in the pool. If the two objects both share the same opposition school, the pool itself glows golden, and wisps of energy writhe up out of the pool to caress any weapons within 30 feet of the pool's surface. The first weapon to be immersed in the pool glows brightly as several Thassilonian runes etch themselves on the weapon, permanently making it a *runeforged weapon*. (If the weapon anointed was nonmagic, the pool additionally grants it a +1 enhancement bonus.) The *runeforge pool* has enough latent energy stored to effectively enhance one weapon per PC. Once a weapon has been runeforged, it cannot be runeforged again. If no weapon is immersed in the pool within a minute, the latent magic reverts back to the original items.

In the final adventure of this campaign, certain wards and creatures the PCs encounter are susceptible to *dominant runeforged weapons* (those enhanced by lust and pride magic, the opposition to greed). If no PC forges a *dominant runeforged weapon*, "Spires of Xin-Shalast" becomes more difficult (yet not completely impossible). You may wish to take advantage of any divination spells the PCs cast, or perhaps reward a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check with clues to this effect—or you might not.

Runeforge Components

The runeforge components found in Runeforge are as follows:

Greed: Elemental arcana water (area **G8**)
Sloth: Caustic waste (Festering Maze)
Envy: Vial of ethillion (area **E3**)
Lust: Bejeweled dominatrix toy (area **H7**)
Pride: Mirror shard (area **I3**)
Wrath: Flames of wrath (area **K6**)
Gluttony: Inib wine (area **F4**)

Component Combinations

Each of the seven Thassilonian schools of magic is opposed by a single *runeforged weapon* quality—each of these being the combination of that school's opposition schools. The seven correct component combinations and the type of *runeforged weapon* each combination creates is detailed below.

Miserly: Greed and Sloth
Covetous: Sloth and Envy
Jealous: Envy and Lust
Dominant: Lust and Pride
Tyrannical: Pride and Wrath
Sadistic: Wrath and Gluttony
Parasitic: Gluttony and Greed

A Runelord Enraged (EL 16)

Although he's not yet fully awakened, Karzoug has reestablished his link with the *runeforge pool*, and when the pool is used to craft *runeforged weapons*, he feels it. Karzoug knows that a *dominant runeforged weapon* is a threat to him, and as soon as the first one of these is crafted, he acts. From atop the Spire of Avarice in Xin-Shalast, Runelord Karzoug reaches out to use the *runeforged pool* himself. With a sudden explosion of water, a beam of golden light bursts from the pool to bathe the statue of Karzoug. Immediately, the towering statue animates, transforming into a greater stone golem. It stares down at the PCs and speaks, the voice the same they heard issuing from Mokmurian at the end of the previous adventure. "You. Again. I can't help but be inspired by your optimism, but alas, your weapons will never reach Xin-Shalast. Your fate is death, here in Runeforge."

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Karzoug Statue **CR 16**

Greater stone golem (MM 136)

hp 271

TACTICS

During Combat The stone golem uses *slow* on the party every chance it gets, moving to place itself in an optimal position before activating this power. It focuses its physical attacks on the character who created the *dominant runeforged weapon*. Fortunately for that character, his newly enhanced weapon bypasses all damage reduction possessed by the stone golem.

Morale Karzoug can maintain the golem's animation for only four rounds. If the PCs still live on round five, the statue spends a round just speaking, "This... this is not the last... come then, heroes. Seek me atop Mhar-Massif, if you value life so poorly. You should be honored to be the first fools executed under the banner of Shalast in ten thousand..." Karzoug is unable to finish his taunts, though, and the golem reverts to inanimate stone. It does not attack again.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure's chapters are organized roughly in escalation of power; Part Eight contains tougher challenges and greater rewards than Part Seven, for example. Yet the PCs are free to tackle Runeforge in any order they wish. Likewise, they have plenty of time to explore the dungeon, and if they can travel the planes, they can even retreat back to Golarion to rest and recover. Runeforge's environment has remained what it is for thousands of years, and while the invasion of a band of heroes certainly stirs things up, Runeforge will be waiting for their return.

Once the PCs manage to forge at least one *dominant runeforged weapon*, they're ready to make the journey to Xin-Shalast. Yet the prospect of escaping Runeforge and returning to Golarion may not be apparent to some parties. Those who lack access to methods of escape like *plane shift* must discover the method of escape via the Sihedron Rune in area **K6**, or use a *scroll of plane shift* from area **G7**. You may need to include other methods for your players to return to Golarion as well, especially if none of them can activate the Sihedron Rune or use a *scroll of plane shift*. Using the *cape of the montebank* from area **I4** while standing in the Sihedron Rune in area **K6** can trigger the exit portal, for example.

Even if the PCs emerge from Runeforge without any *dominant runeforged weapons*, the experience and gear they accumulate in Runeforge is its own way to prepare the PCs for the challenges that await them high in the Kodar Mountains. Even though things might seem to be coming to a head, and it might feel as if Karzoug's about to emerge into the world, feel free to give your PCs time to rest and recover from their ordeal in Runeforge.

For Karzoug has a few final surprises for the PCs before they can finally confront him in the fabled "Spires of Xin-Shalast."

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MAGIC OF THASSILON

LOST ARCANA OF THE RUNELORDS

Upon the Stair of Makers I stood and cast my sight across the Valley of Tribes. What ruin I saw defies the will of symbols to say and blasphemes the holy gift of Lissala. The eyes of the First King lay toppled from beneath his mighty brow, pearls the size of hillsides casting their idiot gaze upon the mountain of Xin's shattered memorial. Below, the Forest of Goree lay rent like trampled grass, the holy river halted by a catastrophic dam—its bricks the cellenwood that shaded our grandfathers, its mortar the twisted gore of the woodland herds. And where once rose the viridian spires of statue-garrisoned Asraliyn now drifted only a billowing pillar of rising copper dust.

Yes, gone were the Driv, the Innori, the Walzt and all their ravening, man-beast kin. But in their place lay the ruin of the world, shaped in the crushed stone valleys of the Oliphaunt's steps.

—Translated from *Jandelay*, scribed at the base of Spindlehorn

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For more than a thousand years, Thassilon dominated western Avistan, erecting an arcane empire on the backs of countless slaves and subjugated races. From seven fractious domains, the rulers of the empire—the runelords—quarreled among themselves, each vying for dominance. The source of their powers, the rune magic discovered and cultivated by Thassilon's benevolent first emperor, Xin, paved the way for his ruthless inheritors to work feats of magical might whose effects still scar the land.

Thassilon fell to ruin nearly 10,000 years ago, and nearly all traces of the once-vast empire have crumbled in the millennia since, save for the magically preserved monuments that litter the Varisian landscape.

THASSILONIAN RUNES

One of the great achievements of the Runelords of Thassilon was the creation of arcane runes empowered to infuse living flesh with magical power. With these arcane markings, the fundamentals of one's lifeforce were altered, allowing the bearer to activate various magical abilities.

Thassilonian runes resemble runic tattoos inscribed in the flesh with arcane inks and scar-inducing irritants. Their intricate forms are endless variations on the seven runes of sin magic. Any individual bearing a Thassilonian rune can make use of its abilities even if not a spellcaster or if its powers are from a school ordinarily prohibited to the bearer.

A Thassilonian rune is considered a magic item but does not take up a body slot in the usual sense. Instead, an individual is limited to possessing one rune, regardless of the creature's or the rune's actual size. The potent magics essential to these runes' function is disrupted by the addition of a second rune, preventing either from working. Once a rune is inscribed, it cannot be removed short of a *miracle*, *wish*, or a *mage's disjunction* cast directly on it (this use of the spell does not have the normal area of effect and can affect only one rune at a time). Even the loss of that body part is not foolproof, for if it is regenerated or otherwise recovered, it returns with the rune still upon it.

Runes are created using the Inscribe Rune feat (see sidebar). Several runes dating back to the time of ancient Thassilon are presented in the following sections, though this list is by no means exhaustive, and PCs with the proper feats and abilities could conceivably develop new ones.

RUNEFORGED WEAPON

During Thassilon's height, many of the empire's greatest soldiers, mercenaries, and assassins wielded weapons infused with two allied schools of magic that worked together to grant the wielder additional prowess over practitioners of an opposing school of magic. Weapons steeped in enchantment and illusion magic, for example, held great power over wielders of transmutation. Such weapons were often banned in Thassilon, so wary were the runelords of their propagation, yet all seven kept champions and assassins armed with these runeforged weapons against their own enemies in secret.

INSCRIBE RUNE [ITEM CREATION]

You can tattoo arcane runes upon your flesh or the flesh of others.

Prerequisite: Caster level 3rd.

Benefit: You can create runes. Inscribing a rune takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. To inscribe a rune, you must spend 1/25 of its base price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of its base price.

RUNEFORGED WEAPON

Aura strong (two variable schools); **CL** 13th

Slot weapon quality; **Price** +2 bonus

DESCRIPTION

Each runeforged weapon quality opposes a school of magic. The wielder gains a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against spells from the weapon's opposed magic. All runeforged weapons are, to a certain degree, empathic. They enhance their traits in those who wield them, so a fighter armed with a domineering weapon becomes more domineering than before, for example. Anyone wielding a runeforged weapon takes a –2 penalty on all Diplomacy checks, as their vices are magnified. No weapon can have more than one runeforged weapon quality at a time, and a creature that carries two runeforged weapons (even those of the same type) takes a –5 penalty on all attack rolls, Will saving throws, and skill checks, as his mind is constantly assailed by multiple empathic urges.

Miserly (opposes illusion): A union of transmutation and conjuration magic, a miserly runeforged weapon functions as a bane weapon against illusionists and creatures from the transitive Plane of Shadow. The first three times each day that this weapon strikes an illusion, it automatically makes a targeted *dispel magic* attempt to dispel the illusion.

Covetous (opposes evocation): A union of conjuration and abjuration magic, a covetous runeforged weapon functions as a bane weapon against evokers and creatures with the fire subtype. As long as the weapon is wielded, the wielder gains fire resistance 5.

Jealous (opposes necromancy): A union of abjuration and enchantment magic, a jealous runeforged weapon functions as a bane weapon against necromancers and against undead created by necromancy spells (not against self-manifested undead or undead created by the create spawn special ability). As long as the weapon is carried, it can absorb up to three negative levels inflicted on the wielder per day.

Domineering (opposes transmutation): A union of enchantment and illusion magic, a domineering runeforged weapon functions as a bane weapon against transmuters and against creatures with the shapechanger subtype. As long as the weapon is carried, it can absorb up to three harmful transmutation effects (such as *baleful polymorph* or *petrification*) inflicted on the wielder per day.

Tyrannical (opposes conjuration): A union of illusion and evocation magic, a tyrannical runeforged weapon functions as a bane weapon against conjurers and summoned monsters. The first three times each day that the weapon scores a critical hit against a creature with the Extraplanar subtype, the weapon casts *dismissal* at the creature struck.

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Sadistic (opposes abjuration): A union of evocation and necromancy magic, a sadistic runeforged weapon functions as a bane weapon against abjurers and any creatures with an active abjuration spell effect. A sadistic runeforged weapon shrouds its wielder in an aura of mock magic—when the wielder is subjected to a dispelling effect, that dispelling attempt instead targets only the aura of mock magic. If the aura is dispelled, it replenishes again in 24 hours.

Parasitic (opposes enchantment): A union of necromancy and transmutation magic, a parasitic runeforged weapon functions as a bane weapon against enchanters and against creatures that are charmed, dominated, or otherwise under another creature's magic control. The first time each day that this weapon strikes a creature under the effects of an enchantment spell, it automatically makes a targeted dispel magic attempt to dispel the enchantment—if the attempt is successful, it siphons that energy into the wielder, healing him of 6d6 points of damage (hit points in excess of maximum are gained as temporary hit points that last for 1 hour).

Runeforged weapons may have other more specific effects as well, such as functioning as a key for a door infused with allied magic, or being able to bypass damage reduction of certain unique creatures. These additional effects are noted in the text of adventures as they occur.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *limited wish*, creator must be specialized in one of the two schools of magic allied with the weapon quality.



MAGIC OF ENVY

The magic of Runelord Belimarius, the Queen of Edasseril, concerned itself with both the defense of one's own magic and the theft of others'. The arcana of envy focused predominantly on spells of the school of Abjuration, which Queen Belimarius layered over all she possessed—her wealth, her servants, and her lands—defending them in only half-imagined paranoia against the intrigues and predations of her fellow runelords. From the plague-ridden hands of her devoted apprentices, ever laboring beneath her poisonous Palace Miasmoria, came an endless stream of covetous, back biting magics, several of which lie hidden away in the ruins of northern Varisia and the Land of the Linnorm Kings to this day.

Covetous Aura

School abjuration; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 5

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range personal

Area 25-ft.-radius emanation centered on you

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

DESCRIPTION

Anytime a harmless (so noted by a spell's saving throw description) spell of 3rd level or lower is cast within the *covetous aura*'s area of effect, you may choose to immediately gain the benefit of that spell as if it had also targeted you. The intended target still gains the effect of the spell. You gain the benefits of this duplicated spell only if the caster is in range of the *covetous aura*.

Rune of Resistance

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot rune; **Price** 45,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

This rune grants the bearer resistance 10 to two energy types chosen at the time that the rune is inscribed.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Inscribe Rune, *resist energy*; **Cost** 22,500 gp, 1,800 XP



MAGIC OF GLUTTONY

With the profane immortality of the undead, Zutha—the lich-like runelord of gluttony—spent years of his centuries-long rule at work in the Flesh Pits beneath Xin-Gastash. Endlessly attempting to satisfy his eternal hunger while at the same time imagining new debaucheries to indulge in, his efforts resulted in the production of a vast collection of foul arcana and unspeakable experiments into the workings of necromantic magic.

Deathwine

School necromancy; **Level** cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 3

CASTING

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range touch

Target 1 healing potion touched/level

Duration 1 hour/level

Saving Throw none (object); **Spell Resistance** no (object)

DESCRIPTION

This spell allows you to turn a healing potion into a temporary pool of necromantic energy. Only a potion created using a conjuration (healing) spell can be affected by this spell. An affected potion turns dark red and reveals a necromantic aura if *detect magic* is cast on it while it remains under this spell's effects.

When you drink a potion affected by this spell you gain no healing.

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Instead, the first necromancy spell you cast within the next minute is cast at a higher caster level. The bonus to caster level is equal to the spell level of the spell used to create the potion *deathwine* affects. For example, a 5th-level wizard who drinks *deathwine* made from a *potion of cure serious wounds* would cast his next necromancy spell as an 8th-level caster.

In addition, any undead creature (or other creature healed by negative energy) benefits from a potion affected by *deathwine* as per the potion's normal effects.

Any healing potion not imbibed before this spell's duration expires is destroyed.

Rune of Obedience

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 9th

Slot rune; **Price** 135,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

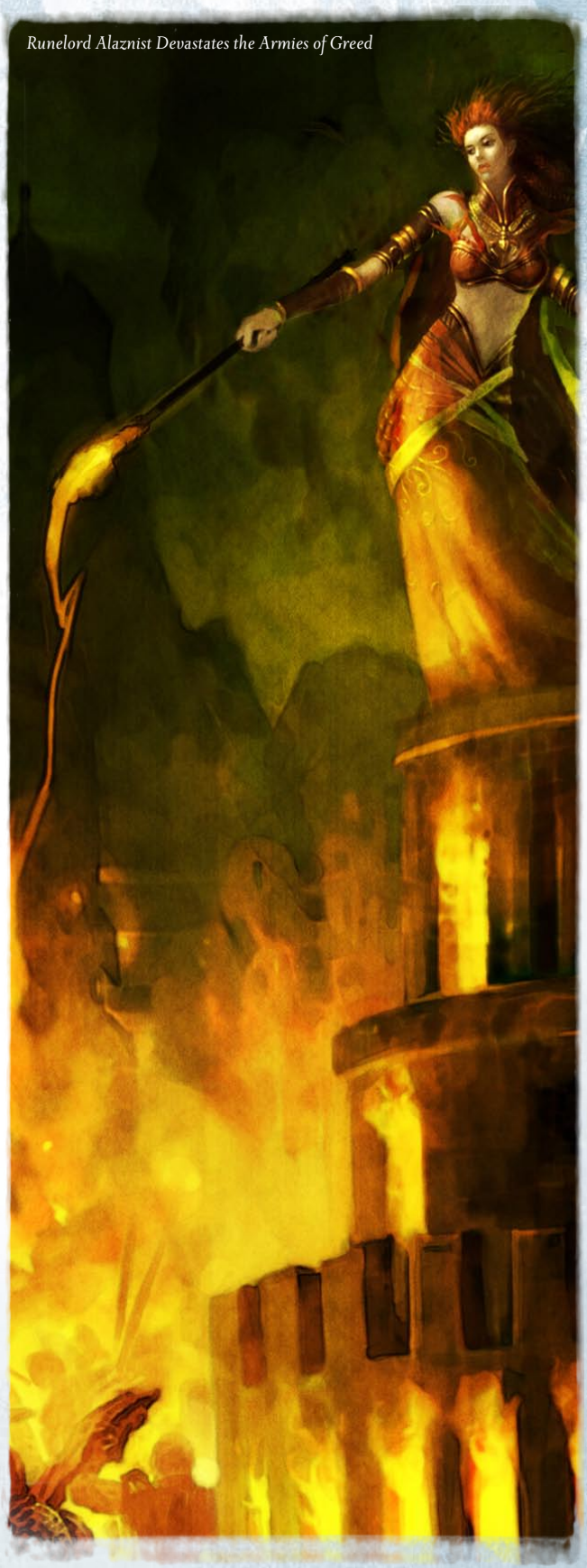
Designed as a foolproof means of ensuring absolute loyalty, even from those ordinarily immune to compulsion and mind-affecting magic, this rune is infused with a single specific prohibition when first inscribed. This prohibition must be stated in 10 words or fewer and the bearer must agree to it of his own free will. From then on, if the bearer breaks this prohibition, he is afflicted with searing pain, taking a –4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for as long as he is in violation of the prohibition and for 5 minutes thereafter. This rune affects any creature who agrees to bear it.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Inscribe Rune, *symbol of pain*; **Cost** 67,500 gp, 5,400 XP

Magic of Greed

Shrewd and imperious Karzoug, the runelord of greed, faced dual wars during his rule: one against Bakrakhan's armies of wrath, and another against his own unquenchable greed. Seeking ever more of all that was worth having, Karzoug drove his apprentices and slave-wizards to manufacture endless quantities of magical equipment and new arcane innovations on merciless deadlines. Those servants who failed became fodder for his personal alchemical research on the transmutation of flesh into gold. Those who succeeded were merely saddled with higher and more impossible expectations. Although the runelord sacrificed countless loyal subjects, the runevaults of Shalast were forever teeming with scrolls and arcane equipment. Many of these lost vaults remain so filled even to this day, buried beneath the weight of fallen Thassilon.



Runelord Alaznist Devastates the Armies of Greed

Blood Money

School transmutation; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 2

CASTING

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Runelord Karzoug Recruits Another into his Golden Legion

Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S

EFFECT

Range 0 ft.
Effect 1 material component
Duration Instantaneous

DESCRIPTION

As part of this spell's casting, you must cut yourself, releasing a steady stream of blood that causes you to take 1 point of Strength damage. Where your blood falls, it transforms into one material component of your choice, chosen from the list of spells you currently have prepared. Even components with gp values can be created, but creating them requires an additional sacrifice of 1 XP for each 25 gp of the component's value.

For example, a sorcerer with the spell *stoneskin* prepared could cast *blood money* to create the 250 gp worth of diamond dust required by that spell, taking 1 point of Strength damage and permanently losing 10 XP in the process. (To cast *stoneskin*, of course, he must still either supply his own piece of granite or cast this spell again.)

Materials created by this spell can be sold as normal. See page 112 of the PH for details.

Rune of Contingency

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 7th
Slot rune; **Price** 147,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

Once per day, the bearer of this rune can gain the effects of the spells *feather fall* and *water breathing*. In addition, if he is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points and is not killed, he turns into a cloud of vapor as per the spell *gaseous form* for 5 rounds. He remains conscious during this time, but after 5 rounds returns to his normal form and is unconscious and dying.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Inscribe Rune, *feather fall*, *gaseous form*, *water breathing*; **Cost** 73,500 gp, 5,880 XP

Magic of Lust

Subtlety and control typified the magic of Sorshen, runelord of lust. Within her numerous palaces scattered throughout the lush paradise of Eurythnia, blind guards protected troves of some of the most diverse arcane treasures in all of Thassilon.

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The magical hoards of Eurythnia spoke less to the industry of the domain and more to the craft of its ruler, for these potent arcane riches were coaxed from the hands of every other domain in Thassilon. Sorshen excelled at discovering and exploiting the lusts of her opponents, and what she couldn't gain as a gift utilizing seduction and political acumen, she took using her unique mastery of enchantment.

Unconscious Agenda

School enchantment (compulsion) [language-dependent, mind affecting]; **Level** bard 6, sorcerer/wizard 6

CASTING

Casting Time 10 minutes

Components V

EFFECT

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target One humanoid

Duration One week/level or until discharged (D)

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

DESCRIPTION

This spell plants a subconscious directive in the target's mind that forces him to act as you dictate when specific circumstances arise. The target humanoid can be either conscious or unconscious, but must understand your language. Upon casting this spell you must state a course of action you wish the target to take. This course of action must be described in 20 words or fewer. You must then state the condition under which you wish the target to take this action, also describing it in 20 or fewer words. Actions or conditions more elaborate than 20 words cause the spell to fail. *Unconscious agenda* cannot compel a target to kill himself, though it can compel him to perform exceedingly dangerous acts, face impossible odds, or undertake almost any other course of activity. You cannot issue new commands to the target after the spell is cast.

If the target fails his save against this spell, he is not compelled to act in any way, has no knowledge of the details of the spell affecting him, and has no memory of the last 10 minutes (although he might come to notice the missing time or the presence of the caster). He can function as he wishes until the events you detailed as the condition take place. Upon experiencing the prerequisite condition, the target is forced to perform the course of action you described as per the spell *dominate person*. For the next hour, the target acts as you dictated, doing all it can to fulfill your command. If, at the end of the hour, the target still has not completed your command, the target is released from the enchantment and the spell ends. Once the course of action is completed the spell ends. The target has full memory of acts performed during this hour.

For example, a wizard might cast *unconscious agenda* upon a farmer, giving him the order "murder the king" to be acted upon "when you hear church bells strike noon." Thus, the next time the target hears church bells strike noon, the enchantment activates and for the next hour he does all he can to murder the king in the most effective way possible, with the spell ending either when the king is dead or the hour passes. How the target acts is wholly relative to the individual and the circumstances. This could lead the target to perform an assassination attempt or, if he's some distance away from where he thinks the king is, ride for one hour at full speed towards the land's capital.

It's difficult to detect an *unconscious agenda*. Casting *detect magic* on someone affected by this spell only reveals an aura of enchantment magic if the caster of detect magic has a higher caster level then the caster of *unconscious agenda*. Even if the spell is detected, it can only be removed by *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *remove curse*, *miracle*, or *wish*. *Dispel magic* does not affect *unconscious agenda*.

Rune of the Mistress

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 9th

Slot rune; **Price** 108,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

Three times per day, the bearer of this rune can cause a creature she touches to take a –4 penalty on all Will saves made against spells of the enchantment school for the next 24 hours.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Inscribe Rune, *dominate monster*; **Cost** 54,000 gp, 4,320 XP

Magic of Pride

Xanderghul, Runelord of Pride, Satrap of Cyrusian, Master of the Unblinking Eye, unsubstantiated Heir of First King Xin, and self-proclaimed Rightful Emperor of Thassilon, claimed many titles, but few so true as Lord of Illusion. From his lofty throne, Citadel Arete—which contradicting accounts record as either a mile-high tower or a floating castle—he veiled his domain in vast illusions, some to delight his fantastically wealthy populace, others to cull the passions of his slaves, but most to baffle the eyes of his opponents. Throughout the entirety of his rule no force dared invade Cyrusian, as none ever truly knew the extent of the domain's forces. To maintain this deceptive veil, the Runelord of Pride employed a variety of potent magical items, including arcana said to have been stolen from Heaven itself.

Raiment of Command

School illusion (glamer); **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 hour/level

Saving Throw Will; **Spell Resistance** No

DESCRIPTION

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You are cloaked in an illusion of authority. Others perceive you to be a legitimate figure of authority—a higher-ranking official, a religious figure, a more powerful warrior. This illusion grants you a +5 bonus on all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. If you attempt to disguise yourself as a specific authority figure, you gain a +10 competence bonus on the Disguise check and any Bluff check related to impersonating that authority figure.

In addition, others are uncomfortable acting against you. Creatures with an Intelligence of 4 or more must make a Will save or take a –2 penalty on all opposed checks against you.

Rune of the Inscrutable One

Aura moderate illusion; **CL** 6th

Slot rune; **Price** 36,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

The bearer of this rune confuses all attempts to divine information about him. This functions as a permanent *misdirection* spell, which the bearer can change the target of (and thus what he is detected as) at will.

In addition, whenever the rune's bearer enters an area affected by a divination (scrying) effect or anytime a creature casts a divination (scrying) spell that targets him, the scrying spell's caster must make a DC 18 Will save. If this save fails, the rune's bearer realizes that he is being scryed upon, knows what spell is in effect, and knows the name of the spell's caster.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Inscribe Rune, *magic aura*, *misdirection*; **Cost** 18,000 gp, 1,440 XP

Magic of Sloth

A master of rune magic and high priest of the rune goddess Lissala, Runelord Krune was both respected and feared—and not just by his people, but by the other six rulers of Thassilon as well. He took great satisfaction in his peers' fear, and displayed the strange and unique powers granted to him by the goddess whenever possible. Among such divine boons were a variety of unique spells and magical items he claimed were gifts from Lissala, the formulas of their creation being imparted to him in visions as rewards for his extreme piety. Although the divine nature of his creations was often questioned behind closed doors, their deadly effectiveness was not.

Swipe

School conjuration (teleportation); **Level** assassin 3, cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 3

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one held item

Duration instant

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

DESCRIPTION

By flicking a finger in the appropriate direction and proclaiming ownership, you attempt to magically wrest an item from the target's grip and summon it to your hand. To claim an object held by an opponent, you must make an opposed grapple check against the target. Size modifiers are not factored into this grapple check and you use your Intelligence modifier rather than your Strength modifier to determine the outcome. Your target uses his Strength modifier as normal. If you fail, the target retains his item and the spell fails. If you succeed, the item teleports into one of your free hands or comes to rest at your feet.

If the item wrested from your target's hands is a weapon, you can cause it to make a single melee attack against the target. This attack is made using your base attack bonus and, if it hits, deals damage normal for the weapon plus your Intelligence modifier.

Rune of the Lord's Palanquin

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 15th

Slot rune; **Price** 135,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

Once per day, the bearer of this rune can summon a floating, semi-real palanquin. This conveyance has all the special abilities of a *phantom steed* and can hold the bearer and up to 150 additional pounds of weight. Other creatures can ride the palanquin as long as the total weight is less than 150 pounds. The palanquin can be dismissed at any time as a free action, but cannot be summoned again until the next day. The look of the palanquin is decided when the rune is inscribed, though it usually takes the form of a regal, comfortable-looking litter that moves without the need for bearers.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Inscribe Rune, *phantom steed* **Cost** 67,500 gp, 5,400 XP

Magic of Wrath

Although possessed of wizardly might on par with the other runelords, Alaznist, ruler of Bakrakhan, cared little for the tedium of spell research and magical item construction. Her interests tended more toward the corruption, mutation, and empowerment of her vast legions, utilizing her cruel arcane genius to create the deadliest warriors in all of Thassilon. For all her efforts, though, the Runelord of Wrath saw her minions as expendable pawns to be

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RELICS OF SIN

Need more Thassilonian magic? Check online at **paizo.com/pathfinder** for a trove of magic items and arcane treasures crafted at the height of the runelords' rule. This web supplement features more than a dozen sin-crafted items, including the soul-stealing phylactery of Runelord Zutha himself.

sacrificed at her whim. Thus, into the ranks of her armies she seeded potent magical creations that often proved as deadly to the user and his allies as to the enemies of Bakrakhan.

Sign of Wrath

School evocation (force); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 6

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, F (a gem worth 1,000 gp inscribed with the Thassilonian symbol of wrath)

EFFECT

Range personal

Area 25-ft.-radius burst centered on you

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw reflex half; **Spell Resistance** yes

DESCRIPTION

A giant, glowing symbol of wrath appears below you, forcibly repulsing all nearby creatures. All creatures within the area of effect take 1d6 points of force damage per caster level (maximum 15d6) and are subjected to a bull rush that attempts to push them directly away from you. The blast's bull rush effect is treated as having Strength 25 + your Intelligence modifier, but gains no other bonuses for size or charging. You are unaffected by both the spell's damage and bull rush effect.

Rune of Razing

Aura strong evocation; **CL** 13th

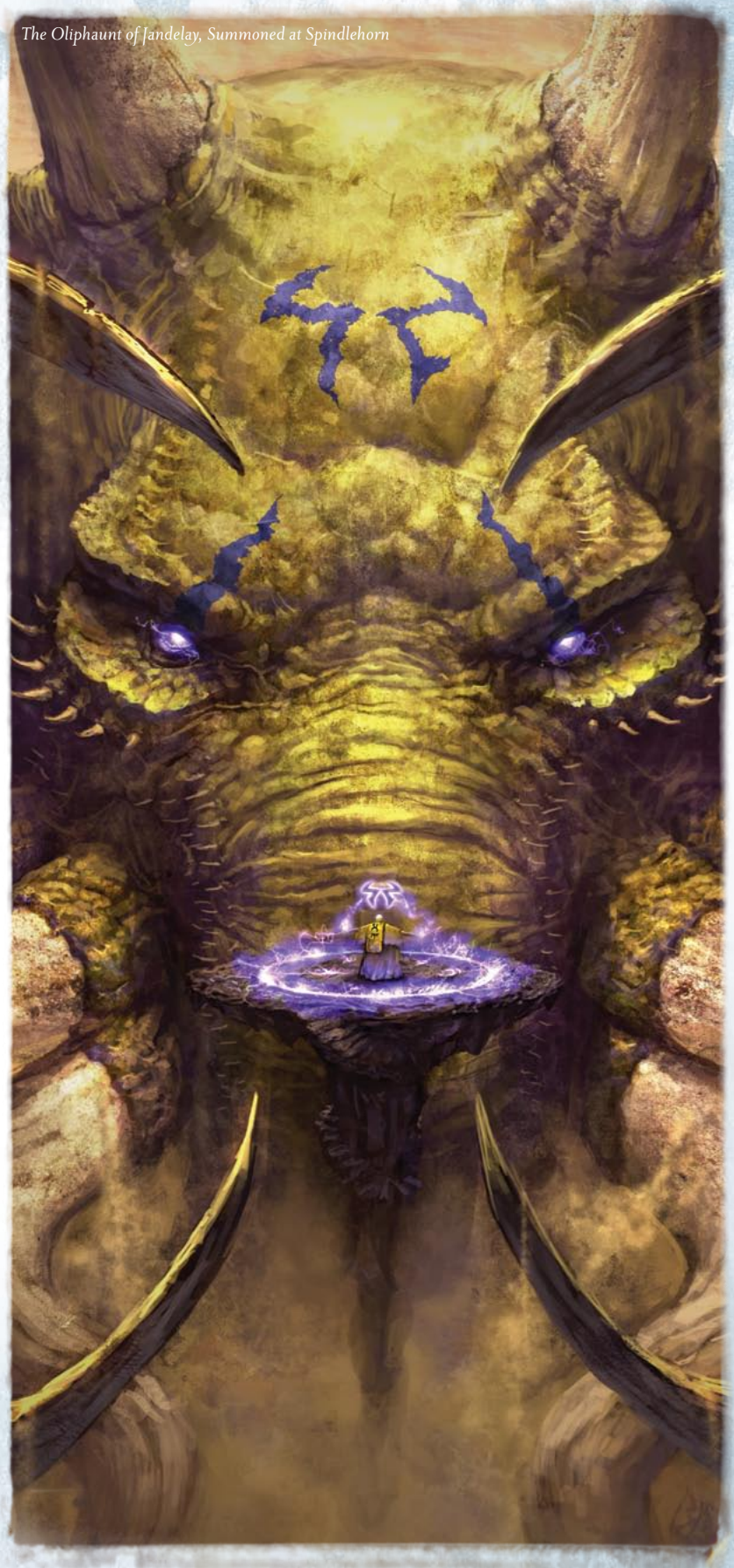
Slot rune; **Price** 91,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

This rune grants the bearer the ability to ignore hardness and damage reduction for 5 rounds per day. Its activation is a free action, and the rounds need not be used consecutively.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Inscribe Rune, *mage's sword*; **Cost** 45,500 gp, 3,640 XP



The Oliphaunt of Jandelay, Summoned at Spindlehorn

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LAMASHTU

THE MOTHER OF MONSTERS

Lamashtu (la-MASH-tu) is the mother of monsters, devourer of infants, and source of all that is corrupted and bestial. A monstrous and terrifying deity born from the depths of madness, she is both fiendish queen and revered mother to the horrors that stalk the night. Legends say that from her womb sprang many of Golarion's monstrous races. Although goblins and gnolls are her best-known progeny, ultimately her foul spawn number too many to count. Her dominion over beasts makes the wilderness a fearsome place, while her nightmares invade the peace of sleep. In her thoughts scream the endless dreams of the insane, and in her will lies the destruction of all things.

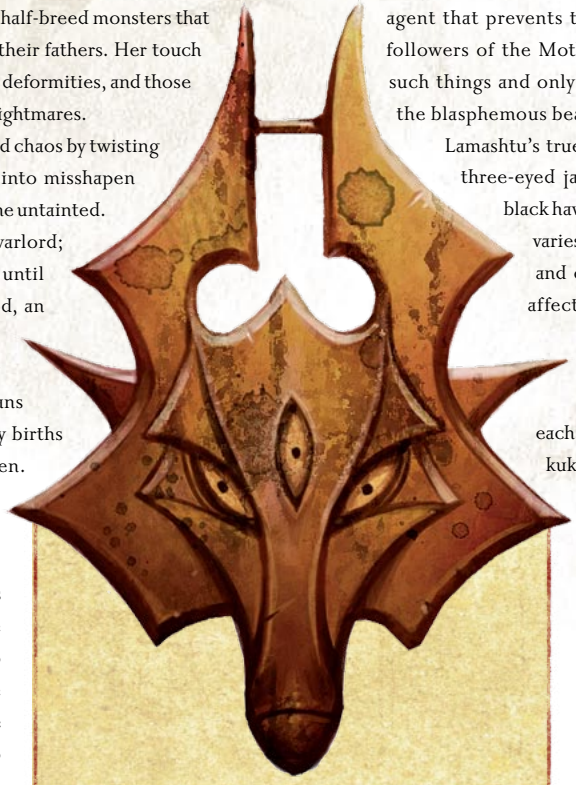
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Lamashtu tore out her own womb and feasted upon it to gain power over the unborn, then regenerated her own flesh by consuming a thousand stolen infants. Her milk can sustain, poison, or even transform those who drink it. Lamashtu steals seed from men while they sleep and uses it to create half-breed monsters that she later sends to shame and wound their fathers. Her touch and breath cause stillbirths and infant deformities, and those who suffer it are usually plagued by nightmares.

Lamashtu's goal is to create evil and chaos by twisting the flesh and spirit of all creatures into misshapen things that cannot stand the sight of the untainted. She is not an empire-builder or a warlord; she only wishes to corrupt mortals until the entire world is her altered brood, an enormous monstrous family devoted to her. If her world is full of warring tribes, so much the better, for it means there will always be a need for many births to replenish the ranks of the fallen. Lamashtu revels in destroying the most innocent, whether defiling their flesh or tainting their minds; to her, a nursery is a banquet. She is a fertility goddess, but while those who pray to her are more likely to survive childbirth, their offspring are inevitably tainted. Offering someone else's newborn as a sacrifice to protect your own is a viable practice for the desperate, and many stories of "changelings" (infants stolen and replaced with wicked faerie-kind) are actually Lamashtu-altered infants who appear normal and then transform overnight into monsters.

The Mother of Monsters has dominion over all unintelligent monsters. She murdered the god Curchanus and stole his portfolio of beasts, which is why the untamed creatures of the wild consider mankind an enemy. Many strange and unique monsters stem from her whim, as she enjoys molding the flesh of radically different beasts to create new terrors. Those plagued by monsters can pray to her for assistance, and in exchange for loyalty and offerings of newborns or infants (or sometimes merely breast milk or placentas, if she is in a good mood), Lamashtu sends her minions away to prey upon unbelievers. Her name can be invoked as a charm or prayer against nightmares, but using it might draw her attention and lead to monstrous births if the invoker is not a member of her cult or doesn't make the appropriate grisly sacrifices.



Great is the daughter of Heaven
who tortures infants.
Her hand is a net, her embrace is death.
She is cruel, raging, angry, predatory.
A runner, a thief is the daughter of Heaven.
She touches the bellies of women in labor.
She pulls out the pregnant woman's child.
The daughter of Heaven is one of the Gods,
her brothers,
with no child of her own.
Her head is a jackal's head.
Her body is a mother's body.
She roars like a lion.
She constantly howls like a demon-dog.
—a Lamashtan prayer

Lamashtu's worshipers believe that purity and perfection are temporary or illusory, while corruption and flaws are the natural and final state of things. While high-minded artists and philosophers might argue that change is a dynamic agent that prevents the stagnation of civilization, the followers of the Mother of Monsters don't care about such things and only want to bend and tear and break the blasphemous beauty they see in the world.

Lamashtu's true form is a pregnant woman with a three-eyed jackal head, taloned bird legs, and black hawk wings. The state of her pregnancy varies, but she is always visibly pregnant, and often hugely so, though this never affects her mobility. She carries two blades: one shrouded in fire called, Redlust; and the other in frost, called Chillheart. The length of each blade varies from that of a standard kukri to that of a falchion. Her voice is deep and rich, but rises to a howl when enraged, and when she screams it sounds like a lion's roar and can be heard for miles.

When the Mother of Beasts is angry, her victims suffer painful joints, infections, or nightmares. For her worshipers, giving birth to an untainted child or one of a "prettier" race (such as a gnoll giving birth to a human or elf) is a sign of great disfavor and shame, requiring many prayers and sacrifices to atone (starting with the unwanted newborn).

Lamashtu is chaotic evil and her portfolio is madness, monsters (including wild beasts), and nightmares. Her domains are Chaos, Evil, Madness, Strength, and Trickery, and her favored weapon is the falchion—though the kukri, with its murderous implications, is also used by and is important to her faith. Her holy symbol is a three-eyed jackal's head. Most of her clergy are clerics, many lesser humanoid clergy are adepts, a small number are rangers, and a handful are corrupted druids. She is called the Demon Queen, the Mother of Beasts, and the Demon Mother. Despite her titles, she is not the creator of the demon race as a whole, though she is served by many such fiends and herself sprung from the depths of the Abyss. Along with numerous well-known demons, she is served by seven powerful demonic sorceresses called the Seven Witches, who, in some tales, are actually her most powerful daughters.

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MADNESS DOMAIN

Granted Power: You gain an Insanity score equal to half your class level. For spellcasting (determining bonus spells and DCs), use your Wisdom score plus your Insanity score in place of Wisdom alone.

For all other purposes, such as skills and saves, use Wisdom minus Insanity in place of Wisdom.

Once per day, you can see and act with the clarity of true madness. Use your Insanity score as a positive rather than a negative modifier on a single roll involving Wisdom. Choose to use this power before the roll is made.

Madness Domain Spells

1 *Lesser confusion**
2 *Touch of madness*
3 *Rage*
4 *Confusion*
5 *Bolts of bedevilment**
6 *Phantasmal killer*
7 *Insanity*
8 *Maddening scream**
9 *Weird*

* See the d20 SRD.

THE CHURCH

Lamashtu's church is scattered and lacks an overall hierarchy. It is rare that two priests come into conflict, as they recognize their shared devotion and the hostility they face from those outside the faith. When conflict is inevitable, the priests compare scars, number of offspring, malformations, and magical power to determine which is superior (note that power is the last element compared—a less experienced priestess with six children can have higher status than an older one with fewer surviving children). Conflict among tribes is just as rare. Those who abandon their original race to become more beastlike are highly respected for their physical sacrifices to gain power and favor in the goddesses' eyes. Adventurers tell of at least one pink-skinned gnoll chieftain who speaks like a human nobleman raised in a great city.

Lamashtu's church is uninterested in formalities, and given the many kinds of creatures that worship her and their varying deformities, it is difficult to create a common uniform for the faith. The shared elements are the open display of scars (particularly belly scars from eruptive births); physical deformities; and her holy symbol as an amulet, brand, or tattoo. In situations where they must hide their allegiance, her worshipers conceal all incriminating marks and touches of her blessing—a clubfoot is a passable deformity and doesn't draw attention, but a clawed hand and furry arm do. Brown and black are typical clothing colors, more out of convenience and availability than a preference for those shades (though they do match the goddess's fur and wings).

Lamashtu's worshipers often perform ritualistic self-mutilation to prove their devotion to her, wearing their scars as trophies until the lucky day when she graces them with some kind of deformity (which is then displayed with reverence). A rare few use primitive surgery to make these alterations, but most are just masochists with a high tolerance for pain and crippling injuries. Pregnant cultists can pray for Lamashtu's blessing, transforming their unborn into monsters that claw their way free instead of birthing in the normal manner. Typically, this dangerous birth is done with non-magical healers present (or when the woman herself is a healer) so the mother has a chance of surviving the process, gaining horrific scarring on her belly. In such ritual birthings, magical healing is shunned as it prevents scarring. The faithful see such scars as signs of devotion and piety. Having many children in this manner is an ambitious goal, especially as some of Lamashtu's spawn are too deformed or fragile to survive long. Because of their crucial role in bearing children, females in the cult tend to have a higher status in their communities than in otherwise similar cultures. For example, orcs (who rarely worship the Demon Queen) treat their females as little better than slaves, whereas gnolls (which usually serve Lamashtu) place females on an equal level with males. Barren women, however, tend to have low status within any Lamashtan tribe and often try to make themselves useful to the tribe in other ways, filling traditionally male roles such as hunting, raiding, and guarding whenever possible. Those unable to do so are shunned, as the tribe considers their infertility a curse from the Demon Queen.

The Demon Queen's followers ritually eat hallucinogenic plants and poisonous animals to alter their perceptions of the mortal world, sometimes causing permanent mental changes and insanity, though in most cases only causing vivid dreamlike or nightmarish visions. They have also been known to poison others with these materials in order to sow chaos. Though most are too crude and direct to formulate complex attacks against the psyche, particularly devious members of the cult have been known to harass and demoralize opposing groups (such as monk orders and religions that espouse physical perfection or beauty) with horrifying campaigns of torture, rape, and humiliation intended to break their enemies' spirits.

Most of Lamashtu's interventions have physical effects on the creature receiving them. For example, a priest wanting to know if he should pursue a vendetta against an old foe might wake to find his canine teeth elongated into fangs. Such changes tend to last only a few hours and give no significant advantage. Sometimes Lamashtu sends "helpful" nightmares bearing clues to her will or the solution to a problem. For example, a troll ranger trying to eliminate a troublesome patrol of dwarven soldiers might have a vivid nightmare of Lamashtu biting the head off of a dwarven infant, which the ranger could interpret as directing him to kill the dwarven captain (the head, or leader of the group) so the soldiers return to their base. Although she is not a deity of healing, in rare cases injured worshipers deep in her favor might wake to find wounds half-healed or a lost limb regrown, though in these cases the result is usually unpleasant to look at and doesn't match the rest of the worshiper's body (a man with a belly wound might have pink scarring and strange hairy growths; a human amputee might have a gnoll's leg; and so on). Communing with the Demon Queen typically involves an animal or beast for her to possess and some sort of meat sacrifice for the creature to eat.

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Services to Lamashtu include howling, screaming, branding, bloodletting, childbirth, and sacrificing humanoids or animals. Sometimes they use intoxicants as part of the ritual, and often it devolves into an orgiastic excess of food, sex, and hallucination. The use of music is limited to a throbbing drumbeat that sets the tempo for the ceremony's events. Services usually take place at night or underground, though an auspicious labor or a particularly long and painful birth might inspire a ritual no matter when it occurs.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

The Demon Queen's church operates on the outskirts of civilization. Most primitive humanoids worship her outside or underground, their gathering places being simple affairs, usually with flat, bloodstained rocks suitable for sacrifices or more ornate rings of stones carved with the goddess's image. Civilized folk usually cannot worship Lamashtu publicly and thus only construct churches officially dedicated to her in the most depraved lands. More commonly, her worshipers build elaborate hidden shrines beneath cities, in ruins, or in other secret redoubts. In such places, Lamashtu's faithful pay their foul mistress honor as grandly as secrecy allows.

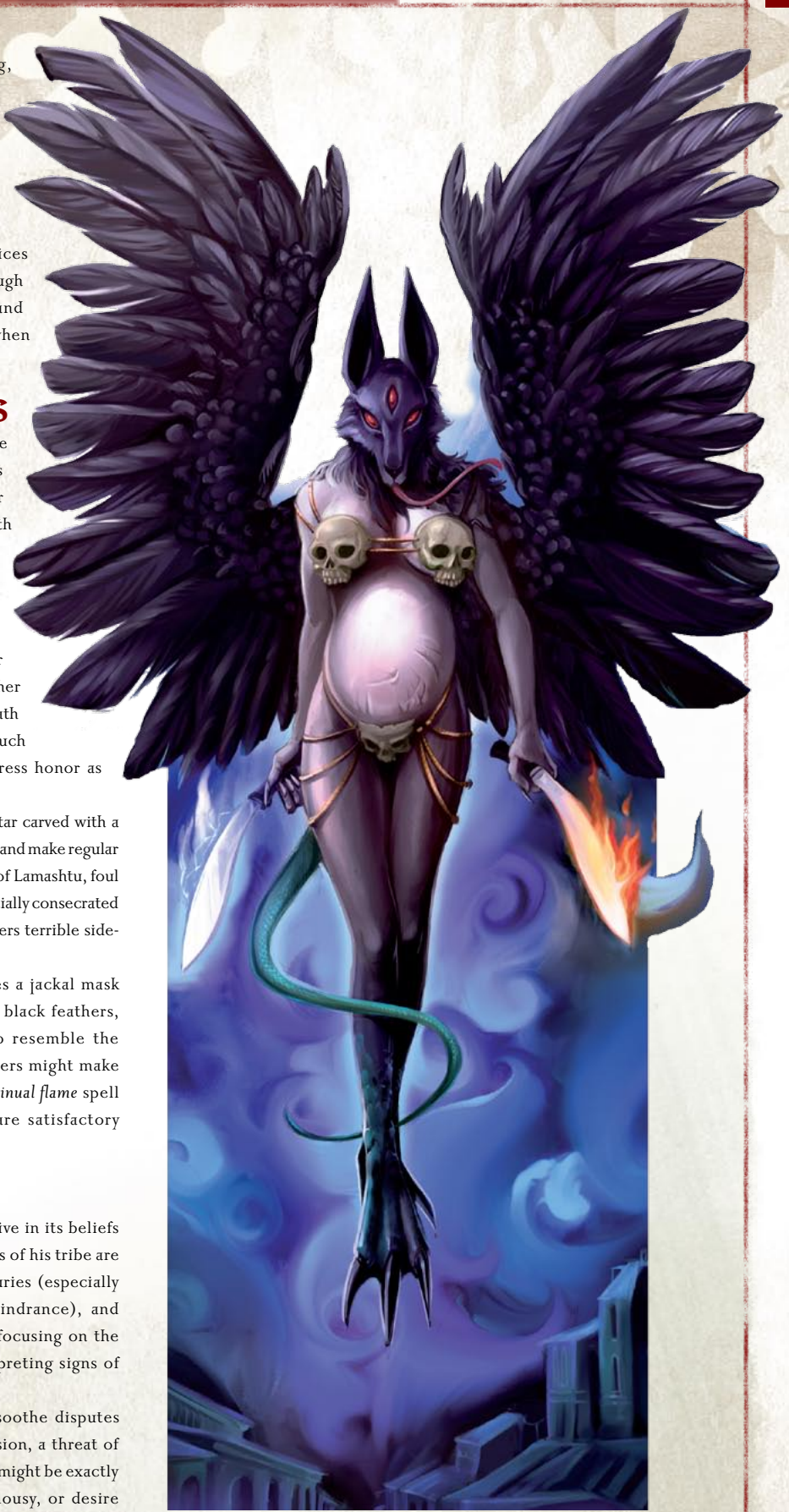
In both cases, Lamashtu's shrines feature an altar carved with a shallow basin. Some sites that do the goddess honor and make regular blood sacrifices to her are blessed with the waters of Lamashtu, foul unholy fluid that bubbles up upon the altar or in specially consecrated fonts. If a creature drinks of these waters, he suffers terrible side-effects (see page 71 and *Pathfinder* #1, page 30).

Ritual garb for established temples includes a jackal mask made of leather or precious metal, a cloak of black feathers, and a pair of swords or knives decorated to resemble the Demon Queen's own weapons. Wealthy followers might make these weapons flaming and frost, though a *continual flame* spell has a similar look, and red and blue paint are satisfactory representations of the icons.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

Lamashtu's faith is ancient, yet still very primitive in its beliefs and habits. A priest must make sure the members of his tribe are strong in their faith, tend to their physical injuries (especially those whose deformities are a significant hindrance), and spiritually guide them through hard times by focusing on the hideous glory of the Demon Queen and interpreting signs of Lamashtu's favor or disfavor.

Her priests use magic, faith, and flesh to soothe disputes and settle arguments—a spell used for compulsion, a threat of torture in the afterlife, or an intimate encounter might be exactly what someone needs to defuse his anger, jealousy, or desire



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for vengeance. As clerics usually have multiple children from different partners over the course of a lifetime and mate often as part of their ministering, male priests usually aren't sure how many children they have fathered and female priests generally can't specify who their children's fathers are. This promiscuity is expected in the same way that a cleric is expected to heal a physical wound (marriages or lifetime pairings are exceedingly rare in the cult anyway, especially among uncivilized humanoids). This sense of practicality is something a member of the faith learns early, and is usually something outsiders adopting the faith must slowly grow accustomed to. Lamashtu's priests learn early how to make hard choices and not to become too attached to a particular person or thing, as sometimes the best way to settle a dispute is to send one of those involved to join another tribe and not see them for years—or ever again. Exposed to deformity at an early age, they are unblinking in the face of the most horrible afflictions and willing to get close to people "civilized" folk would consider unclean or unholy—often to a fetishistic degree.



Priests are responsible for teaching the young about the Mother of Monsters and making sure they understand her importance in their lives. They are not adverse to using their powers to punish reluctant children, either with painful physical transformations or by infecting them with horrible nightmares. Because the children in a tribe often don't have identifiable parents, the cleric acts as a stabilizing influence and harsh role model, cementing his place as the guide for the next generation. While hardly the default baby-sitters for a tribe, they are most responsible for teaching children their place within the tribe and life's savage truths.

Because of these intertwined tribal relationships, most priests have strong ties to their community and aren't encountered alone. Those traveling solo are usually on a mission or vision quest, the last survivor of a dead tribe, or an exile in search of a new tribe. Sometimes these loners hide for a time among lepers and beggars, using their misshapen flesh to blend in and create new converts to the faith. Other priests use their magic and knowledge to infiltrate madhouses in the role of a healer, arranging "escapes" for those who might serve the cult's purposes.

A typical day for a priest involves waking, blessing the tribe's food, physical examination of themselves and others for new flesh or abilities, some manner of masochistic prayer, performing rites over any pregnant tribe members, and examining the tribe's livestock. As most live in small communities, they usually help with other tasks as appropriate to ability, such as hunting, preparing food, and so on. A cleric normally prepares spells after the evening's tribal rituals. The clergy have no official rankings—all are merely priests unless they gather enough fame and power to lead their tribe. A priest with a gift in a particular area might acquire a title appropriate to that trait (prophet, warleader, and so on), but these carry no concrete status within the church.

Because of the cult's association with ferocious beasts, druids and rangers of Lamashtu have prominent roles among the tribes, and in nomadic or more primitive tribes it is not uncommon for someone of these classes to be the head priest or warleader. As they have fewer healing abilities, ranger leaders tend to have clerics, druids, or adepts in supporting roles to take care of the tribe's health, focusing instead on training and using animals, beasts, or summoned demons to aid and protect the tribe.

A THAMATURGE'S ROLE

Because Lamashtu began her existence among the throngs of the Abyss, she retains many connections to that fiendish realm and the perverse spellcasters who seek power from its denizens. Thamaturges are welcomed by the church of Lamashtu, as they devote themselves to their patroness as zealously as clerics—

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some might say even more so—though their pacts with the goddess are more businesslike exchanges of service for power. The Mother of Monsters does not begrudge the arrangement. To most of Lamashtu's servants, the distinction between cleric and thamaturge is semantic, as they fill the same roles in the goddess's cults and tribes.

To gain spells from the Demon Queen, a thamaturge must perform a daily obedience (see *The Book of Fiends*). Lamashtu accepts this obedience in one of two forms: either the thamaturge must engage in a tryst with the sincere intention of being impregnated by or impregnating his partner, or the thamaturge must sacrifice a creature that has been alive for no more than a week—large or sentient creatures are preferred, though insects and other petty sacrifices offend the goddess. Whenever possible these obediences are performed as part of a large, daily ritual before—and possibly joined by—Lamashtu's other faithful. Lamashtu does not acknowledge sacrifices of summoned creatures, but such beings might aid in fulfilling her other obedience. Once this sacrifice of lust or blood is made, the thamaturge regains his spells.

THREE MYTHS

The spawn of Lamashtu have little patience for writing and storytelling, but during blood-soaked rituals and over the screams of the mad, several tales of their dark goddess are told.

The Ancient Betrayal: Ages ago, Lamashtu and the demon lord Pazuzu were not the enemies they are today. Accounts differ as to whether they were siblings, lovers, or merely allies, but working together, they slaughtered thousands of greater demons and claimed a large territory they ruled jointly. When the Demon Queen tore the beast portfolio from the dying god Curchanus, this change in status and power angered Pazuzu. He ambushed her as soon as she returned from the battle, stabbing her with a shard of cold iron snapped from the heart of a mountain, maiming her wings and causing her to fall into an infinitely deep chasm at the edge of their shared realm. It took her centuries to recover, but the godly energy from her stolen portfolio sustained her. Finally, she emerged from the pit and wrested the seat of her power from Pazuzu's territory. She has never forgotten this betrayal and hopes to someday capture Pazuzu, break his wings, torture him, and imprison him under the earth for a thousand years before finally eating his heart. To this day, his name can sometimes disperse her influence, and mortals fearful of Lamashtu's corrupting touch put amulets with Pazuzu's name or image around the necks of pregnant women and newborns to ward her away.

The Great Devouring: Long ago, Lamashtu coveted the power the god Curchanus had over all beasts. She set a trap for him, creating a wandering path that led him through the planes and into a secret part of her realm, whereupon demons and mutated beasts swarmed him. When he was suitably weakened, she attacked him in the form of a great demonic wolf. Her savage jaws tore away his dominion over beasts, leaving him mortally wounded. She would have consumed all of his power, but he used her feasting as an opportunity to transfer his remaining power to his protégé, Desna, who swore to avenge her mentor. To this day, Desna and Lamashtu are enemies, though the Demon Queen considers the star-deity an annoyance more than a threat.

Mother of Monsters: Reveling in her power over beasts, Lamashtu called every savage creature in creation into her presence. Thousands of terrible beast-lords paraded before her, but when the mighty python slithered past, the perverse goddess was overcome with yearning and demanded the creature be her prince. From their union the first medusae were born and the python remains the Demon Queen's favored beast.

This myth is told by nearly every savage worshiper of the Demon Mother, with significant variations in each racial telling. Gnolls, for example, claim that the hyena won the goddess's lust, while harpies say it was the hawk. While all of Lamashtu's servants have their own versions of the tale, it's quite possible that they all are true.

APHORISMS

Servants of Lamashtu extol the insane wisdom of the Mother of Monsters, often in the form of short mantras or savage truths.

Blessed Be the Mother: Partly an oath to the Demon Queen and partly praise to mortal mothers, this invocation may be a battle cry, a plea for help, or a prayer of thanks, depending on the context. It is chanted during childbirth to link the expectant mother to Lamashtu so the goddess takes notice and brings a strong (though deformed) new life. In rituals where creatures are sacrificed, the victim is bled first and the blood used to spell this phrase on the ground in simple runes.

The Scars Are the Proof: When tribesfolk come into conflict, they may challenge each other to battle, although Lamashtu discourages lethal combat between her own followers. Sometimes, the antagonists agree to a "duel of scars," where they compare scarring to see who has been in more battles or marked himself to a greater extent; the one with the most scars is considered the victor. If the decision is too close to call, they may take turns branding or cutting themselves until one concedes victory. Among women, the rough belly-scars from monstrous births are proof of the goddess's favor, and are often the deciding factor in a scar duel.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Lamashtu considers all other gods enemies, although she focuses her energy on nurturing her children and expanding the lands for them to inhabit. She knows Desna hates her for killing the god Curchanus and stealing his beast portfolio, as well as for her nightmarish aspect, but Lamashtu treats the childless, pretty, flighty goddess as beneath her notice. She respects Desna's power and avoids direct confrontation (as she does with any entity that could injure her), but otherwise pays her no mind. Lamashtu sometimes allies with Calistria (goddess of lust) as a means of ensnaring a difficult target but quickly and amiably ends these alliances when

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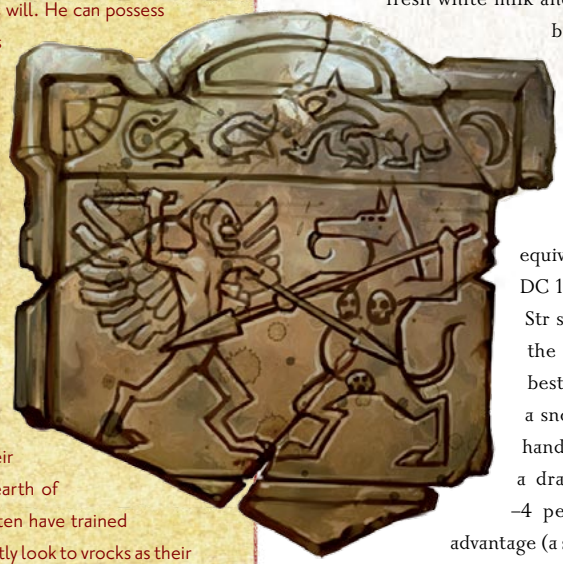
PAZUZU, KING OF THE WIND DEMONS

Pazuzu (pah-ZOO-zoo) is a well-known and powerful demon, rival to many other demon lords. Though his title of "King of the Wind Demons" is one he gave himself, his strength and cunning are great enough to defeat all who have tried to challenge him for it. He looks like a humanoid male with large eagles legs and talons, a demonic avian head, two pairs of birds wings, a scorpion tail, and a snake in the place of his genitals. Territorial and aggressive, he attacks any demon he believes might be a threat to his power and any who enter his realm without permission. Because of this behavior, mortals call upon him to ward off other demonic spirits, though there is always the chance he might take an interest in those he is supposedly protecting. He is immune to air magic and cannot be moved through the air against his will. He can possess mortals, and many of his lieutenants have similar mental powers.

Although there are demonic cults that worship Pazuzu, he has not declared a divine doctrine for his worshipers other than the typical goals of human sacrifice, gaining power, and promoting his name. If he bothered to spend any time creating a coherent doctrine, it would be that, as master of storm and sky, he is greater than all other things, and that one day demons will break the vault of the sky in their home realm and rule the air and earth of the mortal world. His followers often have trained birds or birdlike beasts, and frequently look to vrocks as their cult cell leaders. His cult's ceremonial garb is very similar to Lamashtu's, with the addition of savagely formed wings.

As an animalistic, flying demon lord, Pazuzu opposes Lamashtu's dominion over beasts and seeks to wrest it from her. Like most evil cults, Pazuzu's hides its presence and moves about in secret. Its members prefer to lair in high areas like cliffs or rooftops so they can look out over their territory. The cultists oppose most other faiths but rarely go out of their way to antagonize enemy religions. The exception is the cult of Lamashtu, which Pazuzu cultists attempt to humiliate and destroy whenever possible. Conversely, good deities despise Pazuzu, neutral and evil ones consider him an annoyance, other demon lords treat him cautiously, and Lamashtu utterly hates him for an ancient defeat at his hands.

Alignment: CE. **Domains:** Air, Chaos, Evil. **Favored Weapon:** Falchion.



they are no longer convenient for her. She sees Urgathoa (goddess of undeath) as a rival, as that one's followers can multiply quickly and have the potential to swarm the mortal world. Rovagug (god of wrath) is popular among uncivilized humanoids, and Lamashtu wars with him often over control of various races and tribes. She believes if she could seduce, corrupt, or ambush him to steal his portfolio and worshipers she could gain a great advantage over the other gods. She has a vague interest in capturing Shelyn ("a pointless goddess of the lie of beauty," as she calls her) and transforming her into a hideous breeder of monsters, but such interests can wait until her offspring cover the mortal world. Lamashtu makes occasional deals with demon lords, except for Pazuzu, who is the only demon whom she considers her permanent enemy.

RELICS OF THE FAITH

Followers of Lamashtu tend to rely more on monstrous creatures than objects as symbols of their faith, but the following items are considered sacred by cult members.

Black Milk of the Demon Queen: This substance looks like fresh white milk and always remains just below human body temperature. When touched by a member of the cult of Lamashtu or held in a container by a member of the cult, the pure white color quickly changes to black. It smells sweet but bears a slight undertone of spoilage. An ounce of it is the equivalent of dark reaver powder (ingested DC 18, 2d6 Con initial, 1d6 Con and 1d6 Str secondary). If the victim rolls a 1 on the second saving throw, he gains some bestial trait, such as animal fur, a mane, a snout, backward-bending legs, clawed hands or feet, and so on. This is always a drawback that imposes a permanent –4 penalty on Charisma and never an advantage (a snout does not give the Scent ability, clawed hands do not grant claw attacks, and so on). This physical alternation can only be cured by amputation followed by *regeneration*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish*. A pregnant woman who consumes *black milk* has a miscarriage or a stillbirth. If she nurses a child while her ability damage is still in effect, the child suffers the effect of the poison as well. The *black milk* still functions if used as an ingredient in some other food (such as bread or cheese). It is detectable as evil.

Worshipers of Lamashtu are immune to *black milk's* adverse effects and instead gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 24 hours and immediately heal 3d8+5 hit points of damage upon consuming it. Sometimes the goddess provides 2 to 12 uses of *black milk* in lieu of the Waters of Lamashtu as a reward to a tribe she favors.

Tablet of the Betrayal: This stone tablet depicts Lamashtu's battle with Pazuzu. Roughly a foot long and nearly 3 inches thick, the item was created by followers of Pazuzu and bears cracks and scars from centuries of wear and abuse. Holding the tablet in one's hand gives the bearer a +3 bonus on all saving throws. Once per day, the bearer can use the tablet to cast a *banishment* spell (caster level 15th); a minion of Lamashtu has a –2 penalty to the save against this. At some point, the item fell into the hands of a priest of the Mother of Monsters who, after a long ritual, managed to "retune" its effects

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so that the wielder can, if he chooses, use it to cast *summon monster VI* once per day instead of *banishment*. The tablet radiates a strong evil aura and bestows one negative level on any good creature who touches or carries it. The negative level remains as long as the item is held or carried. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the bearer has the item. Members of the cult of Pazuzu have been found with baked-clay copies of the original tablet that, while lacking the powers of the true tablet, can be broken to allow the bearer to cast a *dismissal* spell (caster level 7th).

NEW DIVINE SPELLS

Clerics of Lamashtu may prepare *nightmare* as a 5th-level spell. Clerics and druids may prepare *baleful polymorph* as a 5th-level spell. Note also that druids and rangers can use *summon nature's ally* spells to summon fiendish animals from the same level summon monster list. Lamashtu's faithful also have access to two unique spells.

Waters of Lamashtu

School conjuration (creation); **Level** cleric 3, druid 3

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (250 gp of powdered amber)

EFFECT

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect up to 1 draft of the waters of Lamashtu per 2 levels

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw see below; **Spell Resistance** no

DESCRIPTION

This spell generates what looks to be clear, pure water, but is in fact a foul secretion known as the waters of Lamashtu. The liquid functions in all the same ways as unholy water (see *curse water*). In addition, any creature that drinks this fluid must make a DC 14 Fortitude save. Success causes the creature to become violently ill, vomit the fluid, and become sickened for 1d4 minutes. Failure indicates the water takes root and drives the victim mad, dealing 2d6 points of Intelligence damage. The subject's score cannot drop below 1.

Casting this spell creates approximately 2 ounces of the waters of Lamashtu, enough for one draft or use (if bottled) as a thrown weapon. The fluid can be created and stored indefinitely, though it cannot be created inside a creature.

Vision of Lamashtu

School illusion (phantasm) [mind-affecting, evil]; **Level** cleric 7

CASTING

Casting Time 10 minutes (see text)

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range unlimited

Target one living creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates (see text); **Spell Resistance** yes

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions exactly as the spell *nightmare*. In addition to the effects of that spell, you can cause a second spell to be delivered when the target wakes at the nightmare's conclusion. You must have this second spell prepared and it must be cast immediately after *vision of Lamashtu* (effectively adding the two spells' casting times). This second spell "rides along" with the *nightmare*, affecting the target as soon as it wakes from its fitful sleep. Any spell can be sent along with the *nightmare*, so long as it is of 6th level or lower, affects one target (which is always the *nightmare's* recipient), and does not deal hit point damage. The second spell's range is irrelevant for the purposes of *vision of Lamashtu*, with even touch attacks being delivered successfully. The target is allowed to save against the second spell if one is allowed. For example, a cleric of Lamashtu could send *bestow curse* along as part of a vision of Lamashtu, but not *blade barrier* (affects an area), *destruction* (too high level), or *inflict moderate wounds* (deals damage).

Worshipers of Lamashtu favor casting *baleful polymorph, bestow curse, blindness/deafness,* and *contagion* as part of *vision of Lamashtu*.

VARIANT CLASS LEVELS

Variant class levels are a way to alter a class's granted abilities without the use of a prestige class. They are always keyed to a particular class, and a character can only take a variant level for their own class (for example, a wizard can't choose a fighter variant level). Like a prestige class, a variant level may have requirements a character must meet before choosing it.

When you select a variant level, you gain the abilities of that level instead of the standard class abilities for your class at that level. You can't "go back" and take the swapped level for your class; the next level you take is the next higher level for the class.

Usually variant class levels are part of a set, such as for level 4, 6, and 10. You do not have to take every level in the set. Unless otherwise stated, a variant level does not interrupt a class's normal spellcasting progression; a 5th-level druid with a special 6th-level druid variant level has the same number of spells per day as a standard 6th-level druid. If a variant level benefit replaces a standard class ability that increases at a specific rate (such as a ranger's favored enemy), it explains how this affects the class ability's progression.

ASHVAWG TAMER

The ashvawg tamer is a variant class that allows a druid to bond with strange and monstrous creatures. Given the unusual nature of these companions, the tamer also learns ways to strengthen his valuable ally. Most tamers worship Lamashtu, the Demon Queen, though a few have discovered these practices independently. Tamers develop a stronger bond with their companion than some of the most powerful druids or rangers, and often travel to exotic locations to find strange specimens to tame, with bragging rights going to those with the most unusual creature.

Class Skills: Eliminate Diplomacy and Heal from the druid's class skill list.

Add Intimidate and Knowledge (arcana).

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ALLIES OF LAMASHTU

Lamashtu's clerics can use *summon monster* spells to call upon the aid of the following creatures in addition to those listed in the spells.

Summon Monster III

Fiendish worg (CE)

Summon Monster V

Barghest (CE)—as normal barghests, but with the chaotic subtype instead of lawful.

Summon Monster VIII

Warped One (CE)—see *The Book of Fiends*.

Nightmare (NE)

Class Features

All of the following are features of the ashvawg tamer druid variant class.

Bestial Bond (Sp) At 4th level, the druid can call out to savage powers of the wilds, entreating them to aid her and her companion. Doing so allows her to cast *cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*, or *remove disease* on her animal companion as a spell-like ability by channeling the power of nature. The druid does not need to have these spells prepared as they come directly from the goddess. Using this ability, however, causes the druid to take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage. Any effect that prevents this Wisdom damage from occurring also prevents the use of this ability.

Variant Companion (Ex) At 4th level the druid adds additional non-animals to her alternate list of animal companions. If she chooses one of these creatures as an animal companion, she may use her wild empathy ability to influence the creature (even though it is not an animal and its intelligence may be above 2), though she takes a –4 penalty on this check. If the druid and the companion share a common language these checks are not needed. If the companion's intelligence is 3 or higher, the number of "tricks" the druid can teach it refers to the number of commands the creature understands regardless of language.

1st Level or Higher: darkmantle, krenshar, shocker lizard

4th Level or Higher (Level –3): hippogriff

10th Level or Higher (Level –9): girallon, griffon, owlbear, sea cat

13th Level or Higher (Level –12): bulette, chimera

Undying Bond (Sp) At 6th level the druid can use her bestial bond ability to cast *resurrection* on her animal companion.

Exotic Companion (Ex) At 9th level the druid adds additional non-animals to her alternate list of animal companions, all of them with higher intelligence and strange shapes. It otherwise functions as the variant companion ability.

7th Level or Higher (Level –6): worg

10th Level or Higher (Level –9): ettercap, manticore, minotaur, winter wolf

13th Level or Higher (Level –12): behir, dragonne, hieracosphinx

Resist Nature's Lure The druid does not gain this ability.

Wild Shape (Su) The druid does not gain her second daily use of her wild shape ability at level 6. Hereafter she has one fewer daily use of the ability than a standard druid of her level.

Venom Immunity (Ex) The druid does not gain this ability.

NPC PRIESTS OF LAMASHTU

From the shamans of brutal tribes to cultists hiding beneth the skin of civilization, Lamashtu's followers might appear wherever there is flesh to torment and minds to corrupt. The following are three faithful Lamashtan cultists whom PCs might encounter during their travels.

Akaam (CE female gnoll cleric 5) is priestess of the Black Tree tribe, an interbred group of gnolls and degenerate humans. She has pale gray fur with red stripes and is easily recognized for her belly scars and the vestigial pair of arms growing just above them. Whether these are a mutation or a parasitic twin is unknown, but they never move except when she is birthing, at which time observers have seen them guiding the newborn out of the freshly-torn wound in the priestess' body. Although of only moderate power in magic, she is greatly respected for her eight pregnancies (all live births) and her visions, said to be insights from the crazed mind of the Demon Queen herself.

Rolim the Red (CE male human ranger 3) is a fire-scarred mercenary who fell in with the Bloody Eye harpies of Belkzen after their lusty queen nursed his badly burned body back to health. Fearing that his human kin would reject his strange appearance, he joined the harpies as a guard and tactician. The skin on his face is red and raw-looking, with his mouth half-contorted into a sneer and all his hair seared off. He has cut the wings from a fallen harpy and stitched the necrotic things to his back to make himself look more like a member of the tribe—he replaces the wings every month or so in a painful ritual. Rolim has become well-known among the region's harpy tribes and mingles with them openly, while his deformities have made him a complete outcast in the few human communities he has dared to approach. Any resentment he feels toward his former race he channels into his devotion to Lamashtu and her desire to foul all that is smooth and soft.

Miss Marri (CE female green hag cleric 11) has lived among the people of Tarvis for more than eight years, taking the place of a midwife who proved particularly delicious. Adopting the woman's identity through the use of her *disguise self* ability, Miss Marri—as she is now called—continues to serve the village's soon-to-be mothers. She assures that every mother has all she needs, doting on each as her own daughters, and mixing them special herbal infusions to make their children strong. Her ministrations, however, often include doses of the waters or milk of Lamashtu, assuring miscarriages or terrible deformities. The distressed local priestess of Pharasma is convinced the goddess of birth has forsaken the town, as she herself is blamed for the blight on Tarvis's children. Miss Marri, however, quietly continues her duties, poisoning only one in every few mothers with Lamashtu's taint.

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PLANAR ALLIES

Along with the shemhazian demon (page 86), the herald of Lamashtu (page 90), and the creatures addressed in the "Summoned Allies" sidebar, the following outsiders serve Lamashtu and only willingly answer *planar ally* and similar calling spells from her faithful.

Bloodmaw: This yeth hound leads a large pack in Lamashtu's realm. He is easily recognized by his different-colored eyes (one glows green, the other has the normal red glow). Slightly more intelligent than others of his kind, he has a fondness for meat soaked in expensive potions that can aid him in combat, particularly high-level *barkskin* and *greater magic fang* potions. He cannot use weapons that require hands and refuses to serve if offered them as payment. He and his pack understand Abyssal and Infernal.

Yaenit: This creature is a type of hyena-demon that resembles a corrupted hound archon, and given the goddess's nature, the first yaenit may have been hound archons that she managed to profane into an evil shape. Yaenit look like gangly, muscular, hyena-headed humanoids, some more bestial and gnoll-like than others. They live to fight, terrorize, and breed, and many half-fiend gnolls roaming the mortal world are almost certainly their offspring. They have the same abilities as hound archons except as follows: chaotic and evil subtypes, DR 10/good (natural and wielded weapons are treated as chaotic- and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction), *magic circle against good* instead of *evil*, demonic telepathy instead of *tongues*, Intimidate +3 instead of Diplomacy, alignment chaotic evil, *detect evil* instead of *detect good*. None are known to serve any demon other than Lamashtu, and her priests know how to summon or call them with spells.

Uzuzap: One of the most pitiful and vengeful creatures in Lamashtu's service, Uzuzap is the Demon Queen's jester, plaything, and pincushion. For as long as the Mother of Monsters has hated Pazuzu she has tormented him in effigy. Capturing a powerful vrock or a similar winged demon that attracts her ire, she warps the fiend's flesh and breaks his bones until he resembles the King of the Wind Demons. Calling the creature Uzuzap, Lamashtu forces the demon to dance and debase itself for her pleasure. Should the Demon Mother fly into one of her legendary rages, or merely if the whim strikes her, it is Uzuzap who is most likely to meet a slow, tortured end. Lamashtu typically only has one Uzuzap at a time. Clerics who call upon the creature via *gate* typically gain the service of a completely insane, advanced 25 HD vrock. Relishing its freedom from the Demon Queen's torments, the fiend throws itself into battle, seemingly as eager to kill as it is to be killed—and thus ending its torment. The Uzuzap only accepts payment in items it might use to harm itself, such a cold iron weapons, and works for less reward if a task has a high likelihood of killing it. However, all of Lamashtu's worshipers know that, should their summons or payments result in the death of the Demon's Queen's favorite victim, that they will be next to feel the goddess's claws.

HOLY TEXTS

Although most writings pertaining to Lamashtu's worship are clawed in stone or painted in blood, her holiest teachings can be found in a pair of profane references.

The Skull of Mashaag: This is the preserved skull of a yaenit champion, said by some to be the father of the Prince of Madness. Slain by a champion of Desna, his skull was found intact by a Lamashtan priest and empowered with the ability to speak the Demon Queen's doctrine in several different humanoid languages as well as Abyssal. Every few years the tribes meet to hear the words from the skull, and heroes of each tribe have contests of strength to determine which tribe holds the skull until the next meeting. The skull occasionally makes observations as if it were a sentient being.

The Four Hides of Lawm: This text is a series of three leather straps stitched together and marked with simple runes telling the history and lessons of the Demon Queen. Lawm, a hero of the faith, created this item by pulling strips of flesh from her own body, tanning them to make leather, then painting them. Two of the strips have been torn and repaired, and if there was ever a fourth one it is missing (one end has holes for stitching, the other does not). No living mortal knows what happened to the fourth strap or what it said; some believe it was damaged in a war, others that it contains a heresy expunged from tribal lore.



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Belly of the Beast

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Curiosity is Man's greatest blessing, that which most distinguishes him from the beasts of the field. The drive to discover, to question convention and unveil secrets, has lifted us up from the dirt, birthed science and culture, brought us both the arcane and the divine. It has made us masters of heaven and earth, and taught us to know the minds of the very gods themselves. In the Pathfinder, this need for truth has been honed to a needle point, an obsession, and one might well argue that in this purity of purpose, we most embody Man's reason for existence on this world.

But gods, sometimes it makes us stupid.

For the first few days after my escape, my braggadocio ran high, and it was enough merely to have recovered my journal and wayfinder. As, in truth, it ought to be—I've no need for further trouble, and I'm no closer to identifying my ioun stone than when I left Kaer Maga a month ago. Yet as the hours roll on, I find myself more and more reluctant to saddle my horse and show this festering hellhole my back. Instead of fulfilling my mission, all I can think about is that puzzle box, and how the thieves seemed to know it on sight, finding it worthwhile enough to jump an armed (if admittedly foolish and inebriated) man and ride halfway across Varisia to turn it over to—whom? What have I stumbled into? And what role does my box play in it? Try as I might, I just can't bring myself to turn my back on such questions. I've got to go back in, got to take back what's mine and find someone who can tell me more. That might be easier said than done, though—something tells me that, whoever these people are, they aren't going to be caught unawares a second time. If I'm going to do this, I'll need help.

So I'll bring in a specialist.

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Evening

Adventurers and mercenaries never really retire. They die, sometimes gloriously in a bard's song, sometimes coughing up their own organs in a muddy battlefield, rarely in bed. Or they live, ruling a nation or on the run, constantly looking over their shoulder.

And some of them—perhaps the luckiest—simply fade away.

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Given the nature of what I had to suggest, I figured it prudent to wait until nightfall, nursing a glass of bad whisky at a dive bar just north of the Icon of Man Ascendant in Northgate. The bartender, while the surly balding sort, didn't seem to find it worth his time to evict me from my place at one of the outside tables, so I sat there long after the whisky was gone, watching the stretching shadows and the children playing on the statue, clambering over its sides and running between its marble limbs. I wonder, in this land of monuments, is this how the ancients would see us today? Children running beneath the feet of giants. Finally, the sun set completely and parents called their broods home. I pulled my cloak tight around me and joined the crowd, weaving my way through the streets to Mainshore.

I walked slowly, and the shop was dark when I finally approached. Though lamps along the street cast a warm orange glow across the cobbles, in the shadow of the stoop I was no more than a whisper of movement as I removed the lockpicks from my pocket and went to work. While not one of my prouder childhood skills, there are some things you never forget, and this lock was easier than I had expected. Before long I felt the satisfying metallic pop as the bolt slid back and the handle turned. Scanning the street to make sure I wasn't seen, I cracked the door and slithered inside, closing it ever so softly behind me.

The storefront was empty, the long counter packed with racks of strange weapons and adornments displayed neatly on thick swaths of exotic fabrics. On the walls, tapestries depicted landscapes the likes of which few in this city will ever see—sailing vessels skirting the Eye of Abendigo, the crowded markets of Vudra, and the golden pagoda temples of distant Qin. Freestanding silver torch-sconces like eight-foot-tall candlesticks, their stems rippled and twisted so the light seemed to extend all the way down their mirror-bright surfaces, stood between them. And from the ceiling hung stranger trophies yet—the head of one of the great jungle beasts they call river gluttons, or a lacquered suit of wooden armor with four arms. All of this I took in at a glance and, relaxing, stood up.

Pain lanced suddenly through my shoulder, and I froze in mid-crouch.

"That's far enough, dirtbag. Keep your hands where I can see them, and move slowly if you hope to use that arm again."

Careful to remain as still as possible, I slowly turned my head. To my right, the slender blade of a short sword extended straight down into the hollow behind my collarbone, pricking my skin and staining my filthy cloak even darker with blood. Following the blade up, I found myself staring into a woman's inverted face, her dark hair falling down around her cheeks and framing a jaw set in quiet determination.

"Sascha. Still agile as ever, I see."

Her eyes twitched slightly in surprise.

CASTLE KORVOSA

Built atop a massive flat-topped pyramid, the citadel of Castle Korvosa rises to almost twice the pyramid's height to make it by far the tallest structure in Korvosa.

The pyramid once served as a vital strategic and religious site for the native Shoanti. When the Chelish settlers moved onto the mainland from Endrin Isle (the island on which Old Korvosa stands), it took them nearly fifteen years to finally and decisively expel the Shoanti from the pyramid. After that time, the people of Korvosa built the first citadel walls atop the pyramid and gained control of Korvosa Peninsula in the process.

Over time, many different leaders have added to the citadel, building up from the top of the pyramid in a variety of styles and for an assortment of reasons. The castle's South Tower, the most recently completed and tallest addition, looms over the rest of the citadel and the city. Its claw-like tip scrapes the sky at nearly 600 feet above the base of the pyramid.



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SPEAKING KORVOSAN

The people of Korvosa universally speak Chelaxian but have, over time, created their own slang and terminology unique to the city. These are some of the terms one might hear while passing through the city.

Arbiter: Korvosan judge. Arbiters wield a great deal of judicial power in the city.

Chel: While in most of the world this word is considered a mildly inappropriate term for someone of Chelish descent, in Korvosa it has evolved into a vicious ethnic slur.

Copper Pinch: Korvosan copper piece. Usually referred to simply as a "pinch" (plural and singular). Among children, calling multiple copper coins "pinches" often elicits playful tweaks on the arm or backside.

Gater: Someone who lives in Northgate.

Gold Sail: Korvosan gold piece. Always called by its full name to differentiate it from the similar term "sail" (see below).

Moth: A full-blooded Varisian.

Pincher: A very poor person who scrapes by on only a few copper pieces a month.

Platinum Crown: Korvosan platinum piece. Often referred to as simply a "crown."

Sail: A ship.

Shingles: The rooftop highways and temporary residences above the city.

Silver Shield: Korvosan silver piece. Frequently called by its full name to differentiate it from the shields used for protection.

Vaults: Any underground opening beneath Korvosa.

"Eando?"

"The one and only."

Faster than the pain could register, she slid the sword from my shoulder and somersaulted over me, dropping from where she had clung to the lintel like a spider. Landing on her feet, she jammed the sword point between two floorboards and stood looking down at me, balled hands on hips.

"Well, get up, then. Sorry about the shoulder, but you're lucky I didn't have the alarms armed, or you'd be complaining of a lot worse. What're you doing in Korvosa, anyway? And why in the name of the gods are you breaking into my house in the middle of the night?"

I rose and found myself staring up into her eyes. Even now, the years hadn't shortened her any. To those who didn't know better, she might have been a comical sight—a bulky, middle-aged woman swaddled in a thick woolen dressing gown, black hair shot with gray and every inch the scolding matron, save for the well-oiled blade at her side. They might have written her off, and that would have been their mistake—and possibly their last. For even through the robe, I could see that the fat of years overlaid ropy muscle, and her eyes still moved restlessly from place to place with the urgency of a hunter.

"Nice bathrobe," I said.

"Hmph. Can't say you look much better. Come on and sit, I'll get us some drinks and see to that scratch."

I let her lead me through a beaded curtain and back into a cozy apartment even more packed with oddities than her shop. Sitting me down at a battered wooden table, she produced an unlabeled bottle of what smelled like sour rotgut and took a long pull before pouring a liberal amount into my wound, where it stung like a thousand ants. As she carefully stitched my shoulder back together, I told her the story of my escape from the strange gang lair. I finished right as she did, and at my description of the guards I'd narrowly avoided, she suddenly gripped my wounded shoulder hard, making me wince.

"Ow—what?"

She moved around me to seat herself in the only other chair, facing me across the unvarnished surface of the table, and I was surprised to see her expression grim.

"What color did you say they were they wearing?" she asked.

"Crimson... all the same shade, head to foot. Even the hilts of their swords. Seemed kind of foppish, really. Why?"

She reached for the bottle and took another long pull.

"You poor, poor fool," she said. "You really have no idea how lucky you are, do you?"

I said nothing, so she continued.

"You didn't just drop into any old thieves' guild, Eando. There's only one group in Korvosa that would dare wear robes like that, or need a safe house of the size you've described, for that matter. Surely somewhere in your chronicles you've heard of the Red Mantis?"

The name set off a warning bell somewhere in the back of my skull, but she was warming to her topic and kept going.

"Kline, these guys are bad news. The Mantis has its claws in a dozen countries at least, and probably owns politicians in a dozen more. They aren't just thieves—they're assassins, and the best in the business. Totally ruthless. These guys don't care who gets in their way as long as they take out their target, and they *always* take out their target. You're a fine Pathfinder, but you mess with the Mantis and that diary of yours is going to be awful short."

"Well then," I said, "looks like I'll be needing some help getting back in, doesn't it?"

She stared at me in stunned silence for a moment, then burst out laughing.

"Are you kidding? I haven't run a job in years! I'm retired. I've got my shop, and a nice little nest egg tucked away besides. I won't deny we had some good times—and gods know, I owe you almost as many favors as you owe me—but my adventuring days are done. And to tell you the truth, I don't miss them at all. I'm happy to help you fence whatever relics you come across in your ramblings, but I'm out. Give me a nice warm bed and a pouch full of gold over a dirty bedroll and a pinched breakfast, I say."

"Sure you do," I replied with a sneer. "You never get bored being a merchant, never miss the rush of night air on your skin or the whistle of your knife in the dark. That's why your sword's still

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polished bright, why you can still hang from the ceiling with ease. I'm sure those skills come in useful when negotiating with the dreamy nobles who buy these knick-knacks won by someone else's blood. You never lie awake at night, listening to the footsteps in the dark and imagining one last run. Not you."

She glared at me. "What you're suggesting is suicide," she said.

I smiled.

"Then they'll never expect it, will they?"

14 Erastus, 4707 AR

Our planning went late into the night, and the next day was spent in bed, waiting and resting as best we could, not knowing when we'd next get the chance. As night fell, I made my preparations, being sure to tie my journal, wayfinder, and ioun stone directly to my body beneath my armor with strips of linen. They'd probably be safe in Sascha's shop, but I wasn't about to take any chances this soon after recovering them. I was debating how much rope to take when I heard a rustle and turned to see Sascha come through the curtain.

The change was absolute. Instead of the gown, she wore a studded leather jerkin over a long-sleeve leather shirt, both of them bearing scars from repeated patching. Straps held thick leather bracers to her arms, with a dagger strapped under the left one, and similar tie-downs held gold-inlaid steel greaves to her shins. An elaborately decorated Losen half-skirt wrapped around her waist beneath a jewel-encrusted belt to complete the ensemble. The sword from last night was back in her hand, but now it glowed with a pale blue fire that she quenched with a flick of her wrist. Only the smattering of gray in her hair and a slight strain on the straps of her armor paid homage to time's passing.

"Good to see you can still fit into the old thing," I said.

"Go to hell, Eando," she responded with a smile.

We left by the back door and moved west, crossing into Ridgefield and then to the northern end of the Avenue of Arms and the intersection where I had cornered the elf previously. We were crossing the square when a scream rang out from behind me, savage and bestial, and I whirled around in a half-crouch, hand on my sword. Sascha's outflung arm hit me across the chest, holding me in place.

"Easy, Eando. It's just the Company. Look."

She pointed upward, and my eyes rose to where a hippogriff perched atop the peak of the Great Tower. From a saddle on its back, a black-clad rider watched the city below, dark cloak fluttering in the breeze. Then the great beast cried again, its eagle-head voicing a fearsome hunting call, and the pair leapt into the air, winging swiftly over the rooftops and out of sight.

"What the hell was that?" I asked.

"The Sable Company," she replied, turning me back in the direction we had been traveling. "The city guard in Korvosa is one of the most honest I've encountered, upholding the law out of love for Abadar as much as for the king, but no power in Korvosa goes unchecked for long. The Sable Company men are the best of the best, and while the guard reports to the king, the Company takes orders only from the Seneschal of Castle Korvosa. Both are used primarily to police the city, but the unspoken understanding is that if either the king or the seneschal ever went bad, the other would still have the means to take him down and cut the head off the snake. You've got to love a military order whose entrance oaths include the promise of regicide, but that's Korvosa for you. Here, even the good guys keep tabs on one another."

"Sounds like your kind of place."

"Oh, it is. It is."

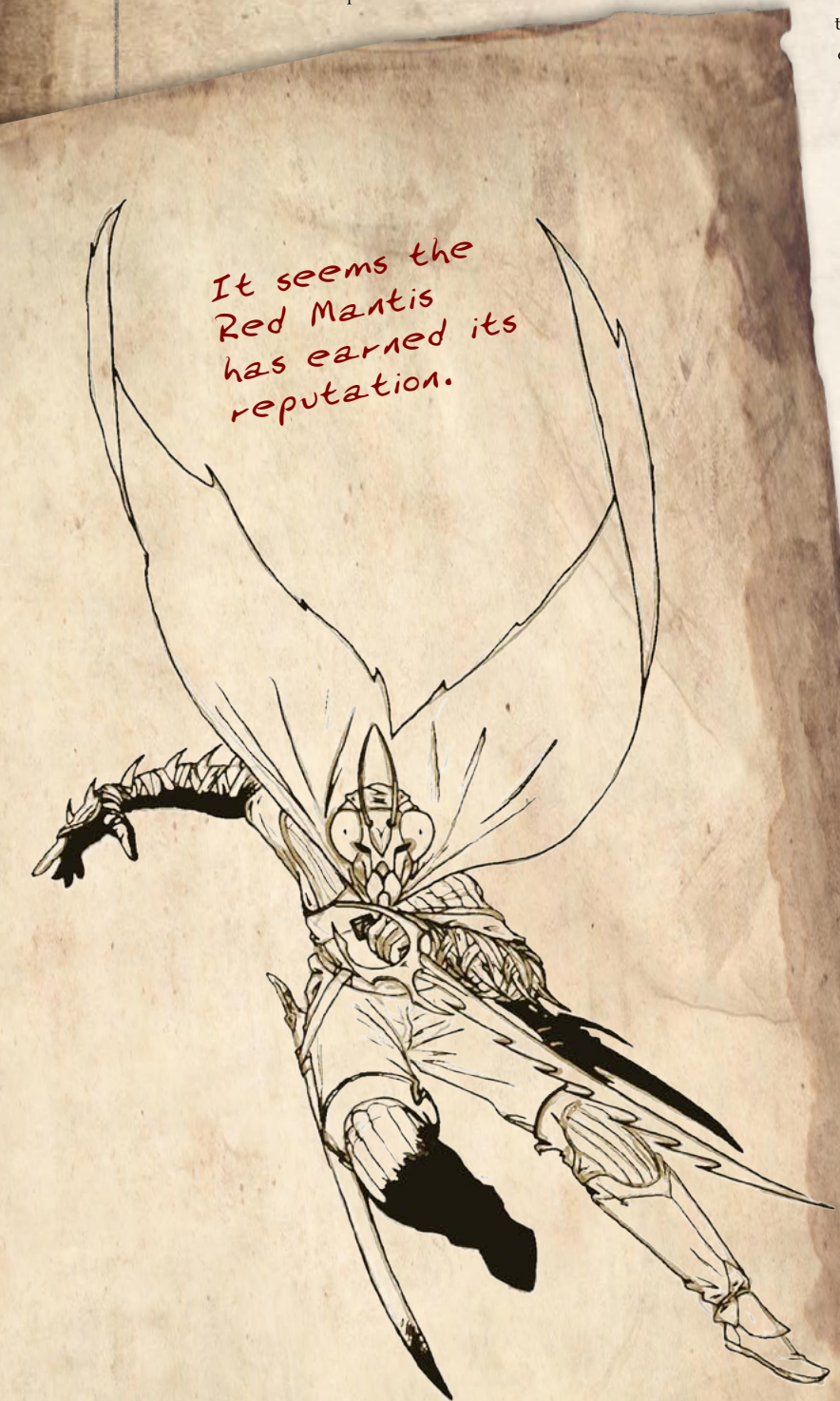
We continued on, and before long we were crossing the bridge into the cesspool that is Old Korvosa. Retracing my steps from a few days before, we moved through Bridgefront and into



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Garrison Hill, where we turned and followed the hill's curve around to the northeast, ending along the same waterfront lane full of fishermen. We made our way to the little window I had slid through before, and much to my surprise, it was still shattered. Sascha sighed a little, and I knew her thoughts, for they were also mine: if they didn't bother fixing the window, it meant they had abandoned the safe house. Or is that just what they wanted us to think? I had to know for sure. Searching carefully for traps, I knelt down and peeked inside.



Empty. Not even a smear of blood to mark the desperate struggle of a few days ago. Slipping a small crowbar from my belt, I quickly and quietly cleared the rest of the glass shards from around the frame. With Sascha standing guard, I slipped through the window and set down softly on the floor. Behind me, Sascha leapt lightly to the ground.

The key I had recovered from the elf opened the same door in the floor, and we crept quietly down into the sewers, swords drawn and more certain than ever that we were walking into a trap. Why else would the Mantis have left their back door wide open? We made our way to the large open pit, but this time there were no massive otyughs slopping around in the muck. It didn't make me feel any better.

As I slipped around the edge of the arch onto the ledge encircling the cesspit, Sascha suddenly grabbed my arm and pulled me back. Pressing us flat against the wall, she twitched a hand to point past me toward our destination, to where a dark, hulking creature slouched in the shadows of the exit passage: a troll, and armed.

I held my breath, but it was too late—the troll had already seen us. He loped toward us with remarkable speed and, even as we backed farther into the corridor, he roared and swung his massive spiked club with all his might. The swing went wide, but the masonry corner next to my head exploded in a cloud of shrapnel that stung my face. Before the dust settled or the troll could draw back his club for another attempt, Sascha slid in under the troll's grasp and plunged her blade low into its abdomen in a smooth, perfect thrust that squelched out his back between his shoulder blades. But instead of the expected gout of blood, the thing merely shuddered once and straightened, his hands grasping for the blade as he gave a rumbling, imbecilic chuckle.

"Oh, right," Sascha said, and twisted the sword's hilt. Blue flames lit up the blade, still sheathed in the troll's flesh, and he roared in pain as he threw himself backward off of the burning sword, foul smoke rising from the seared edges of the wound. Taking his club in both hands, he swung with renewed vigor, just barely missing my shoulder. Despite my lack of flaming blade, I hacked hard at the beast, hoping to at least distract him. To my surprise, my sword cut deep into his hip, and the troll's step faltered, bringing him stumbling into me. Wrenching the sword from my hand, he pulled the blade free and flung it down the hall with a clatter, his flesh knitting together before my eyes. Bringing his sharp-nosed face directly in line with mine, he drew back his lips and bared a row of pointed fangs, his fetid breath hot on my face. Weaponless, I did the only thing I could think of: I smiled back, and patted his warty, filthy cheek.

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It was all the distraction Sascha needed. Slipping around behind it, she plunged her sword directly into the point where skull met spine, driving it in almost to the hilt. I have no idea if the creature even felt it—one second he was ready to gnaw off my face, and the next he coughed once and collapsed, bearing me to the ground in an avalanche of stinking flesh. Trying hard not to retch, I eventually managed to kick my way free of the beast. Casually wiping her blade on the troll's corpse, Sascha held out my own sword.

"Try and hold on to this next time," she said, and I snatched it without response.

We waited a few minutes to listen for reinforcements, but at last the stench got to us and we passed down the corridor the troll had guarded until we reached the spot where I had climbed up the first time. There we found a few pine needles and dirty hay, but no raised dais. In quick whispers, I explained the situation to Sascha, and she replied by sheathing her blade and deftly scampering up the wall to push open the trap door. A heartbeat later, she slipped into the room and let the panel fall shut quietly behind her.

A tense moment passed in silence, then the trap door reopened and a crimson form slid through, landing with a crunch at my feet. I kicked his body into the narrow channel of filth next to me and accepted Sascha's hand, scrambling up into the mudroom beyond. Together, we slipped through the wide corridors of the safe house, keeping to the shadows and making barely a sound. Despite the sizeable halls, the place seemed strangely empty, and the slightest movement rang like a gong in the heavy quiet.

Partway down the main thoroughfare, we suddenly heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and I pulled Sascha into a thankfully unoccupied storeroom, leaving the door open the tiniest crack. Through it, we watched as three men moved down the hall we had just vacated, two of them laboring to carry a heavy chest between them. All three were dressed in red, but while the two chest-bearers were bareheaded and wore the robes I was familiar with, the third was another story entirely. Instead of robes, his chest and legs were encased in brilliant, blood-red leather armor that looked as supple as skin, with a flowing cloak cast regally over one shoulder. His arms were wrapped in strips of scarlet cloth, from which protruded wicked barbs like knife-blades. Most impressive, however, was his helmet, a strange affair with a closed facemask that made his head look for all the world like that of a massive insect, two smoky crystal lenses protecting his eyes. They passed us by without notice. Exchanging a glance, Sascha and I slid out into the hall behind them, keeping to the shadows. They entered the mudroom, and from outside we could hear the leader call out a name. Once. Twice.

I looked at Sascha. We couldn't risk an alarm. She nodded.

We went in fast and hard. With the silence I remembered so fondly, Sascha moved lightly across the room to one of the men with the chest and grabbed him around the throat from behind, sliding her dagger flat between his ribs. He collapsed, dropping the chest with a loud crash and eliciting a cry from the other man. By then, I was already in the air, leaping over the corpse and bringing my blade in line with his eye. At the last moment, he ducked, avoiding my sword but bringing his head within range of my knee. I twisted to bring it up with the full force of my momentum, and his face crumpled like a sack full of eggs. With a bloody gurgle, he dropped.

By this time, the leader was on his feet and had drawn his sword, a strangely barbed weapon like a saw-toothed sabre. Sascha closed the door to the mudroom as the leader and I stared at each other.

"You again," the red-clad man murmured, his voice ringing strangely inside his helmet. "You caused quite a fuss on your last visit. So good of you to stop back by and make things right."

"Really," I said, "it was nothing."

The three of us darted from side to side, too cramped in the room to truly circle, until at last the man saw an opening and lunged at me. Sascha caught his blade high on her own and I moved in for the kill, but the man kicked fast and caught me a numbing blow on the shin that nearly swept my feet out from under me. I turned my recovery into a savage upward thrust, but the Mantis danced out of the way, somehow avoiding Sascha's slash to the throat. He flowed between us like water, seemingly everywhere at once, and despite our concerted efforts he nearly had us. Only the fact that, with the two of us working in concert, he could not afford to counterattack saved our lives and allowed us to slowly back him into a corner.

Eventually the minor nicks and scratches we had managed to inflict seemed to take their toll, and the Mantis's movements began to slow. His blade beats became weaker, his ripostes slower, and Sascha and I knew that, tough as he was, even the greatest fighter will drop from exhaustion if tested long enough. It was only a matter of time.

Or so we thought. At last, the Mantis slumped to one knee, his blade held above him in a feeble defense. Sascha moved in for the kill, and in our eagerness we noticed too late the free hand thrust into a concealed pocket. In one deft move, he rolled to the side, tossing down a small clay ball that shattered with a flash of light and a deafening bang. When vision returned, the room was empty, and through the ringing in our ears we could hear shouts of alarm from elsewhere in the building.

"Hell," I said, and looked to the open trap door, but Sascha was already kneeling in front of the chest, handling her lockpicks like an artist with his brushes. With a triumphant click, the lid popped free, and Sascha threw it wide.

When I first saw them carrying the chest, I had hoped against hope to find my puzzle box inside. Instead, I found myself staring down at two rows of them, stacked like bricks within the padded case, each of them carved with a unique arrangement of human skulls and other morbid imagery. I looked at Sascha.

"This good enough?" she asked.

"Yeah," I breathed. "Yeah, I think it is."

Each of us grabbed two of the boxes and tucked them under our arms, leaving our sword arms free for whatever lay ahead. Then, with the sound of running feet approaching from the hall, we dropped into the sewer, and were gone.

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SIZE COMPARISON

Creatures of legend and terrors from the Outer Planes fill out this month's Bestiary. The shemhazian demon makes a ruinous appearance at the end of the Halls of Wrath in this month's adventure, Stephen S. Greer's "Sins of the Saviors." The yethazmari, the infamous herald of Lamashtu, ties directly to Sean K Reynolds's exploration of Lamashtu's dark cult, while the complete description of the herald of Desna expands upon his revelations on the goddess of dreams from *Pathfinder* #2.

Many of the creatures on the following pages hail from varied Heavens and Hells, the vast Outer Planes that exist beyond Golarion. GMs running "Sins of the Saviors," or any game heading into high levels, are likely to find their PCs interacting more with the planes and the inhabitants thereof. For every unique ally characters might gain—like the night monarch—there are countless other planar terrors—like the shemhazian demon and yethazmari— ready to send even the most powerful planar travellers running back to the sanity and safety of the Material Plane.

THE ART OF THE WARBEAST

For years, Steve Greer has been one of our go-to guys whenever we've needed a deadly dungeon, solid article, or other devious imagining. Thus, it was no surprise when, in addition to his multi-thousand-word turnover for "Sins of the Saviors," we received a sizable color illustration for one of his Bestiary creatures, the warbeast. By artist Ted Reed, the piece showed us exactly what Steve was driving at—a massive multi-eyed menace more than capable of punting PCs with its varied and deadly limbs. Although the warbeast saw a few changes and eventually transformed into the fierce, Lamashtu-spawned shemhazian demon, the original imagining and extra effort were fantastically helpful in bringing about the version that appears on page 86.

So thanks to both Stephen and Ted for all the exemplary work. You can check out Mr. Reed's entire portfolio of fantasy artwork at **ashenvaleart.com**.

—Wes Schneider

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ERCINEE

Beating its powerful wings, this massive multicolored bird circles purposefully. Its eyes are pits of greenish flame and its radiant feathers cause it to soar in stark relief against the comparably dull sky.

ERCINEE CR 4

N Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +10, Spot +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15
(–1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 38 (7d10)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d6+3) and
bite +4 (1d4+1)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks unstable screech

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; +8 ranged touch)
At will—*dancing lights*, *light*
3/day—*searing light*

TACTICS

During Combat If provoked, an ercinee begins combat by using its unstable screech and then seeks out confused foes and uses *searing light* and flyby attacks until they are no longer threats.

Morale Ercinee will not fight to the death. If reduced below 10 hit points, an ercinee flees.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +14

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Wingover

Skills Bluff +8, Listen +10, Spot +11

Languages Auran

SQ lighted way, radiance

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Lighted Way (Su) At will, an ercinee can shed drops of luminous fluid from its wings. This liquid falls behind it as it flies, with one droplet falling every 25 feet. Where these droplets land, the area within 5 feet is lit by shadowy illumination. This fluid lasts for 1 hour, after which it evaporates to nothing.

Unstable Screech (Su) An ercinee can, as a standard action, emit a shrill and bewildering screech. Any creature within 30 feet of the ercinee must make a DC 15 Will save or be *confused* for 1d4 rounds. Creatures who succeed at this save cannot be affected again by the same ercinee's screech for 24 hours. Creatures already *confused* take a –2 penalty on their save to resist additional unstable screeches. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

Radiance (Sp) At night, an ercinee sheds light as the spell *daylight*. It can suppress or reactivate this ability as a free action.

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Alignment neutral

Advancement 8-12 HD (Large)

Also called alicanto, ercinee are enormous, multicolored creatures resembling giant birds of prey. Unlike normal birds, however, ercinee are infused with a magical luminescence that causes the tips of their feathers to emit green light as well as giving their green eyes a burning appearance. This luminescence is only apparent at night. On average, an ercinee stands about 6 feet tall from talons to beak and its wingspan measures 14 to 18 feet.

ECOLOGY

Ercinee subsist on a diet of smaller, meaty prey. Rabbits, deer, and sometimes even dogs seem to be the meals of choice. Ercinee avoid inhabited areas and thus rarely have the opportunity to see humanoids as food, but given the chance and a strong enough hunger, ercinee can and have hunted two-legged prey.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Ercinee in the wild are never seen outside of temperate forests. They prefer the tallest trees or highest cliffs for roosts but rarely spend any time in their nests. Several humanoid societies revere and even worship the ercinee as spirits of travel. It is said that viewing an ercinee as one begins a trip is a sign of good fortune. Seeing an ercinee on the return trip, however, means the traveler need beware, as some foul event is sure to transpire during the journey. Some societies speak in hushed whispers of the ercinee and warn that to follow one is to invite almost certain death. Many a warrior has followed the glowing bird in the dead of night, hoping to find a way to safety, only to take a fatal step from a cliff or a tumble into a deep cave.

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MARSH GIANT

Half-hidden by rotting vegetation and moldering wood towers a hulking brute, a savage giant the color of stagnant swamp water. Animal bones, filthy skins, and crude wooden fetishes barely cover its brutish frame, and two piercing white eyes stare hungrily from beneath a sloped brow.

MARSH GIANT **CR 8**

CE Large giant

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +5

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 18
(+3 Dex, +9 natural, –1 size)

hp 123 (13d8+65)

Fort +15, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee greatclub +14/+9 (2d8+9) or
slam +14 (1d4+6)

Ranged rock +12 (2d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks rock throwing

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)
2/day—*bestow curse* (DC 15), *fog cloud*
1/day—*augury*

TACTICS

Before Combat Marsh giants often use their ability to summon a *fog cloud* before sneaking close to pelt their prey with javelins.

During Combat Although weaker than most giants, marsh giants delight in hand-to-hand combat and rush foes as soon as they near.

Morale Fanatical creatures, marsh giants usually fight to the death, seeing defeat as a slight against their god.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +19

Feats Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Hide +1 (+9 in swamps), Knowledge (nature) +1, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Spot +5, Survival +3, Swim +14

Languages Giant

SQ rock catching

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Rock Throwing (Ex) The range increment is 100 feet for a marsh giant's thrown rocks.

Skills A marsh giant has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks in swampy terrain. It also gains a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered.

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate marshes

Organization solitary, gang (2–6), tribe (7–16 plus 20% noncombatants)

Treasure standard

Advancement 14–19 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment +5

Barely topping 11 feet tall, marsh giants are small for giants but make up for their relatively diminutive stature with their heathen zealotry. Their flat features and bulging eyes mark them as particularly ugly giants—even by the standards of their hill giant kin. The rotten shade of their skin allows them to easily blend into their swampy homes. Their dealings with profane forces from the depths of the sea beyond the edges of their swampy environs have also granted them a number of eerie magical abilities.

Marsh giants speak a throaty variation of Giant littered with various exclamations in Boggard, which turns most humanoids' stomachs to hear.

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ECOLOGY

Marsh giants scrape a pitiful, brutish life from the bogs and swamplands they inhabit. Reluctant vegetarians, their primary diet consists of bitter roots, mushrooms, and a variety of stunted swamp fruits. Although marsh giants prefer meat, the snakes, birds, and small mammals common to the wetlands usually prove too troublesome to capture in the large numbers needed to satisfy the giants' hunger. Thus arise tales of marsh giants wrestling enormous alligators and anacondas in pursuit of meals, or raiding humanoid villages to sate their merciless hunger.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Their names being something of a misnomer, marsh giants are more likely to inhabit dense swamps and bayous than the treeless expanses of actual marshes, though it's not unknown for their hunters to make forays into such open, soggy reaches under the cover of darkness. Marsh giants live within some of Avistan's densest and most fetid wetlands—particularly those of southern Varisia and Cheliax. They prefer saltwater swamps to freshwater, using dense, tree-covered coastlines to hide their nightly rituals and the secret sacrifices their foul religion demands. While they are physically well suited to life in such dismal environs, their legends—as well as those of several other giant cultures—tell that the progenitors of the marsh giant race were forced to flee to such inhospitable lands after breaking some sacred giant taboo.

Marsh giants are rarely found alone or in large numbers, keeping to small, inbred tribes and degenerate families of fewer than two dozen. The refuges they create are filthy, frightening hovels covered in mold and moss and teeming with all the base life of the swamp. These cramped shelters often stand unevenly on stilts or situated upon muddy hummocks. Within, marsh giant females split their time between poorly performing domestic chores and gorging themselves on toxic mushrooms, which they believe allow them to commune with the spirits, but in fact do little more than leave them in stupefied reveries and poison their milk, further retarding their children. Males spend the majority of the day gathering food in the swamp, hoping to chance upon large game such as boggards, dire animals, or immense reptiles. Such food rarely makes it back to the hunters' families, being squabbled over and devoured raw on the spot. While marsh giants spend their days at such depravities, at night, their selfishness, cruelty, and grotesquery rise to the level of religion.

MARSH GIANT RELIGION

Marsh giants practice a destructive and sinister form of nameless animism. While they attribute spirits to all things in the world, from plants and animals to the water and their tools, they see themselves as masters of this spiritual world. By their reasoning, one's soul is empowered by devouring and enslaving the souls of others. Thus, killing and devouring an animal or plant feeds not just a giant's body, but strengthens his soul. These destructive beliefs lead marsh giants to devastate the lands they inhabit, killing and maiming for perceived spiritual benefits. This also stunts the giants' population, as birthing a child is thought to siphon spiritual energy from the mother's soul (and to a much lesser extent, the father's), thus making pregnancy a brutally exacted punishment and causing the lives of most children to be resentful, violent, and short episodes. As all marsh giants are in constant spiritual competition, no shamans or religious authorities exist in their communities.

Yet, while their faith is blatantly savage, it is inspired by a deeper profanity. For countless generations, marsh giants have believed in some nameless god-force—a churning chaos hidden deep beneath the sea. It is to this being that all marsh giants promise themselves, hoping their spirits might one day strengthen and become a part of the primal destruction beneath the waves. While their own souls are the greatest sacrifices they can offer, marsh giants also perform nightly rites in secluded coastal coves, wherein idols of wood, caged animals, and live captives are sunk beneath the waves to strengthen the force below.

As the holiest ritual of their faith, in the deepest dark of the Winter Solstice, marsh giants hold mass sacrifices upon their hidden holy waters. On the currents of this unholiest night, the blood sacrifice is carried to the abyssal depths, summoning up the spawn of the destructive deep. The following night, things too blasphemous to walk upon land pull their bulk from the sea to suffer the adoration and hospitality of the savage giants. In their spurting and gibbering wails they carry insane prophesies to the cruel giants. As their foulest blessing, they share their seed with the demented marsh dwellers before sliding back into the churning waves.

What deformed offspring crawl forth a few sickeningly short months later bear the traits of both parents, along with a malicious insanity marsh giants see as the blessing of their nameless foul patron. Only in the creation of half-giant abominations do marsh giants see a use in procreating—their imparted souls becoming one with the monstrous aquatic terror they revere.

VARIANT MARSH GIANT

As the culmination of unnatural rites, marsh giants sometimes breed with sea-spawn horrors they perceive as the servants of a dark god. The briny-smelling offspring that result from these couplings typically have grotesque, fish-like features and a variety of strange abilities. Each, independent of its kin, scours the depths of the swamps with an unknowable but doubtlessly perverse intent. These "brineborn" have the same stats as marsh giants, but are CR 9, bear the aquatic subtype, and have a swim speed of 40 feet, along with the following additional abilities.

Amphibious (Ex): Although brineborn are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely on land.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*speak with animals;* 3/day—*contagion* (DC 15), *diminish plants* (DC 14), *quench* (DC 14).

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WITCHFIRE

The specter of a horrifying crone hovers several feet off the ground, her semitransparent body afire with otherworldly green flames. Her wild hair, tatters of ghostly clothing, and aura of eerie fire violently whip and waver, as if caught in some soundless hurricane.

WITCHFIRE **CR 9**

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +19, Spot +19

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 23, flat-footed 17
(+7 deflection, +6 Dex)

hp 84 (13d12)

Immune fire, incorporeal traits, undead traits

Fort +4, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

OFFENSE

Spd fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee witchflame touch +12 touch (8d6 fire plus witchflame)

Ranged witchflame bolt +12 touch (8d6 fire plus witchflame)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; ranged touch +12)

At will—*dancing lights*, *disguise self*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 18), *ray of enfeeblement*

TACTICS

Before Combat If she knows a battle is forthcoming, a witchfire turns invisible and summons will-o'-wisps to aid her.

During Combat After spreading her witchflame to as many foes as possible, a witchfire jealously attacks the most beautiful or weakest-looking opponent.

Morale Unwilling to lose her accursed unlife, a witchfire flees if reduced to fewer than a quarter of her hit points.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +6; **Grp** —

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Skills Bluff +23, Hide +22, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (any two) +19, Listen +19, Spot +19

Languages Auran, Common, Giant

SQ mimicry, witchflame aura

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mimicry (Ex) A witchfire can imitate the sounds of any animal found near its lair.

Summon Will-O'-Wisps (Sp) Once per day, a witchfire can attempt to summon 1d4+1 will-o'-wisps with a 30% chance of success. The chance of success increases to 60% if used in a dense woodland area. The will-o'-wisps arrive in 1d6 rounds and serve the witchfire for up to 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

Witchflame (Su) Any creature damaged by a witchfire's touch or ranged attack takes 8d6 points of fire damage and must make a DC 19 Will save or be engulfed by an aura of eerie green flames. These flames deal no additional damage, but any creature affected by this effect glows as if it was the target of a *faerie fire* spell and is sickened. In addition, while the flames burn, the creature takes 150% normal damage from fire. These strange flames persist for 10 minutes. They can only be extinguished early by *break enchantment*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish*.

A witchfire can also unleash a blast of concentrated witchflame as a ranged attack. This attack deals 1d8 points of fire damage and forces the target to make a save or be affected by the witchflame's persistent effect.

Witchflame Aura (Su) Any creature that enters the same square as a witchfire or strikes it with a melee attack—even one that is negated due to the witchfire's incorporeality—must make a DC 19 Will save or be affected by witchflame.

ECOLOGY

Environment any swamp or woodland

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 14–21 HD (Medium), 22–28 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment —

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A witchfire sometimes spawns upon the death of a hag, when one of these savage crones dies with some terrible plot unfinished or simply proves too maliciously tenacious to succumb to death's grasp. Appearing as spectral witches, with forms similar to but exaggerated from their former bodies, witchfires are typically between 5 and 7 feet tall, with some, particularly former annis hags, appearing larger and more powerful. The most distinct feature of the creatures are the flames that constantly whip and flicker about their forms as they float through their gnarled forest homes. These ghostly fires are widely believed to be the same "witchlight" or "witchfire" of rural legends, the mysterious luminescence thought to give light to will-o'-wisps.

ECOLOGY

Where, in life, most hags indulge in grotesque hungers, in death, they have no physical need to continue such depredations. This makes the fact that most hags continue to kill and mimic feeding all the more senseless and perverse an act. Witchfires delight in cursing creatures—man or beast—with witchflame, then tearing them apart. These acts serve only to delight their cruel senses of humor.

Although witchfires have no need to feed, the will-o'-wisps that often follow them do. The attraction of will-o'-wisps to witchfires seems to transcend the bounds of similar wickedness, as will-o'-wisps are capable of feeding off the emanations of a witchfire's aura. While this doesn't sustain them like true emotions of panic and horror, the witchflame seems to induce a state of malicious euphoria. This, coupled with the true terror and death that typically follows in a witchfire's wake, make will-o'-wisps eager to follow, even obey, these spectral hags.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Witchfires turn their surroundings into living nightmares. A witchfire typically remains in the same region she haunted in life, though in some cases the unfinished plot that ties her to the Material Plane might demand she travel far. While the horrors are usually found in dense forests and swamps, aquatic varieties raised from slain sea hags are not unknown. Areas frequented by witchfires for long periods grow foul and corrupt, as the witch's deathless malevolence seems to taint the very earth. Water goes stagnant, trees wither and become gnarled, animals flee or fall sickly and die, all in malign reaction to the spectral resident.

Although hags are likely to form quarrelsome coveys, witchfires are too proud and arrogant to seek out and join with other undead of their kind. Should a witchfire have been part of a covey in life, however, she is likely to seek out her sisters and attempt to subjugate them. If a witchfire deigns to suffer her sisters in death, the powers she brings to the covey are substantial.

WITCHFIRE COVEYS

Witchfires never gather in coveys of their own, being too rare and lacking the corporeal forms required to practice the magic of the hags they once were. In exceedingly rare situations, though, a witchfire might be welcomed into or subjugate an existing covey. Should this occur, the covey's powers change. While the hags can still create a hag eye once per month, they gain the following spell-like abilities in addition to those a covey can normally produce:

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*blight*, *create undead*, *fire storm* (DC 21), *nightmare* (DC 18), *waves of exhaustion* (DC 20). Caster level 9th. The save DCs are based on a Charisma score of 16. To use one of these abilities (which requires a full-round action), all three hags must be within 10 feet of one another, and all must participate.

A covey including a witchfire must always have at least one living hag member. Having two witchfires and a hag still allows them to use all of their covey powers, but a covey of three witchfires would gain no covey-related abilities.

THE FIRST WITCHFIRE

Long ago, a hag called Pouzel dwelt at the heart of Lurkwood in northern Varisia, known to all around as a place of foul beasts and dark deeds. For years, her presence struck fear in the hearts of innocent folk, and those who lived near Lurkwood barricaded their doors and windows every night.

Then, one day, a warrior named Arren Elton came to the hag's wood. Approaching her hut of skin and gnawed bones, he was taken in by the illusory facade Pouzel had woven to disguise her hideous form. Although the hag had used the illusion merely as a trick to torment and mislead the young hero before she consumed him, something about Arren stayed her claws.

Arren stayed with Pouzel many days, basking in her false beauty. During that time, the hag became truly enamored with the young knight. In a careless moment, the hag let her facade slip and Arren saw her true form. Disgusted, he drew his sword to slay her. In a moment of compassion, though, he told Pouzel that if she was capable of creating such a beautiful glamer and softening his heart, then surely that beauty must come from somewhere within her. At the knight's side, Pouzel came to discover the goodness and beauty within herself, and vowed to change her ways.

Soon after, the young knight's comrades arrived at the hovel to learn what had happened to their friend. There they found Pouzel and Arren together and assumed she had bewitched him. When they attacked, the young knight fought to protect her. In the end, Arren died of his wounds soon after the battle, leaving his former comrades defeated.

In the aftermath of the battle, Pouzel knew she could not live without Arren Elton. She immolated herself and his body within her hut atop a bier of bones. The overwhelming sorrow emanating from Pouzel as the eldritch fire consumed her attracted nearby will-o'-wisps excited by such strong emotions. When some of the will-o'-wisps ventured too near, though, Pouzel's wretched suffering proved too much for even these malicious creatures to endure, killing them by the dozens. From the collective torment of so many dead, the first witchfire was born.

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DEMON, SHEMHAZIAN

A giant of gnashing, predatory fangs and rending limbs crashes forth. Vaguely humanoid, the thing lopes upon massive wolf legs ending in talons the size of short swords. From a chest of corded muscles sprout patches of wiry hair, long arms ending in chitin-covered claws, and the massive, scythe-like forelimbs of some monstrous praying mantis. Behind lashes a prehensile tail bristling with sharp barbs, and atop its bestial trunk thrashes a terrible head, half sharp-toothed canine, half venom-bloated arachnid. Drool flies from its mandible-flanked maw beneath rows of unblinking, insectile eyes.

SHEMHAZIAN — CR 14

CE Gargantuan outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, true seeing; Listen +25, Spot +33

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 10, flat-footed 26
(+4 Dex, +20 natural, –4 size)

hp 200 (16d8+128)

Fort +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

DR 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +22 (2d6+10) and
2 scything claws +20 (1d8+5) and
bite +20 (2d8+5 plus poison) and
tail lash +20 (2d6+5)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (30 ft. with tail)

Special Attacks paralyzing gaze, poison, rend (4d6+15)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)
At will—*detect good, invisibility, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *unholy blight* (DC 17)
3/day—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, fly, prying eyes*

TACTICS

During Combat Delighting in rending helpless enemies limb from limb, a shemhazian prefers to attack opponents paralyzed by its gaze.

Morale A shemhazian always fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 19, **Con** 27, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +16; **Grp** +38

Feats Alertness, Awesome Blow, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Climb +37, Hide +11, Intimidate +22, Jump +33, Listen +25, Move Silently +23, Search +27, Spot +33

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Paralyzing Gaze (Su) Paralysis for 1 round, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 21 negates. Evil creatures are immune to this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 27, initial and secondary damage 1d12 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Rend (Ex) If a shemhazian hits with both of its claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 4d6+15 points of damage.

Summon Demons (Sp) Once per day, a shemhazian can attempt to summon 1d4 vrocks, 1d3 hezrous, or a glabrezu with a 50% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

True Seeing (Su) Shemhazians continuously use true seeing, as the spell (caster level 14th).

Skills Shemhazians have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Their keen sight grants them a +8 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks.

ECOLOGY

Environment The Abyss

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 17–32 HD (Gargantuan), 33–48 HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment —

Although nearly all the horrors of the Abyss prey upon one another in an endless, eternal bloodbath, shemhazians are predators among predators. Standing more than 30 feet tall, they are more intimidating and physically powerful than most demons, combining the features of numerous insectile and bestial hunters into one massive, deadly form. They are creatures of extreme violence that relish bloodshed and prove tenacious

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enough to stalk their prey through many of the Abyss's deadly environments, especially when that prey reeks of demon blood.

ECOLOGY

Although they don't require sustenance, shemhazians are constantly on the hunt. They take perverse delight in consuming their victims, and what they cannot eat they simply destroy. Perhaps in some instinctual loathing of their own race (likely a result of their aberrant birth; see sidebar), shemhazians prefer the taste of their own kind to all other creatures, and actively prey upon one another. They also frequently choose to stalk other demons over mortal prey.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Shemhazians are true demons and denizens of the Abyss. They flourish on innumerable layers but seem to prefer areas of dense jungle and broken, rocky reaches.

As many demons fear shemhazians, some of the most powerful demon princes seek to enslave the ravenous beasts and forcibly draw them into their hordes. This typically requires breaking the creature as one would train a wild beast, as few shemhazians can ever be convinced or bribed into serving another demon—such is the strength of their hatred for their own race. The exception lies with the goddess Lamashtu and the potent demons allied with her. Shemhazians obey the will of their mother, the goddess of madness, as well as the commands of those they see as her proxies and servants.

In the rare cases where shemhazians come to serve other creatures, they are often employed as living engines of devastation, sentinels over things of vital importance, and assassins of the most devastating caliber. Those who force these demons into service usually find them useful for little more than the mindless destruction of whatever comes within reach.

TREASURE

Despite their savagery, shemhazians are intelligent creatures with proclivities beyond mere slaughter. Many of these demons show an incongruous tendency to collect two types of delicate treasure: angelic trappings and eyes. Likely some deeply-rooted racial memory of their heavenly progenitor, shemhazians are sometimes caught intensely scrutinizing the rent remains of heavenly armor or endlessly fondling delicate weapons and instruments of similar make. These wistful examinations often end in rage, though, as the demon breaks the thing and goes to seek some weaker fiend on whom to take out its wrath. Their powerful senses also seem to leave many shemhazians with a fixation for eyes, especially those larger than their own. Some have been known to keep mounds of grisly trophies yanked from the heads of their largest victims. Carvings of eyes and jewels stolen from the heads of statues also hold their perverse fascination.

As such, the lair of a shemhazian is typically filled with a gruesome hoard, the broken treasures of the heavens heaped among piles of dried, stolen eyes.

THE SUNDERING OF SHEMHAZAI

Once, in a time before the peoples of Golarion had the wisdom to set down dates, the Empyreal Lord Shemhazai prevailed over the powers of vision and insight. In the great conflict that divided the upper planes, Shemhazai was among the ranks of Heaven who opposed the will of the gods. He agitated for exodus rather than outright rebellion. Many sided with Shemhazai, as his foresight and judgment were renowned, and preparations were made for departure from the realms of the mistrusted gods.

Not willing to risk the lives of those who had put their trust in him, Shemhazai himself went forth in search of a new home. In his travels, he wandered far and saw much, but—unknown even to the Empyreal Lord of Vision—he was seen as well. Soon he had journeyed farther from the Upper Planes than he had ever trod and found himself in dark and mysterious lands. There, like the falcon that preys upon the dove, the goddess Lamashtu assailed Shemhazai and spirited him away to the depths of the Abyss. The followers of Shemhazai searched far and wide for their beloved lord, but they lacked their master's sight and, when they learned of his abduction, it was too late.

For untold centuries Lamashtu tortured Shemhazai, shattering his beautiful, celestial form and breaking his immortal mind. In ages of endless agony his thoughts opened to the Mother of Monsters, and from him she learned much of the gods of good and law, their minions, and their weaknesses. She even took from him his divine seed, and, in her profane womb, grew the litter of abominations that would become the first shemhazian demons, named in mockery of their father.

When finally Lamashtu had learned all the fallen angel knew and his pain no longer brought her pleasure, the Demon Queen locked her plaything away in the darkness, leaving him prisoner should she ever have need for him again.

EXAMPLE SHEMHAZIANS

Among the most feared denizens of the Lower Planes, fearful tales of shemhazians are whispered through the spheres.

Arundgrror: Captured by a family of snake-headed rakshasa, the shemhazian Arundgrror rages in a deep pit with magically slick walls beneath the audience hall of the fiendish clan's patron. Those who do the rakshasa lord dishonor are dropped into the pit for the demon to feast upon.

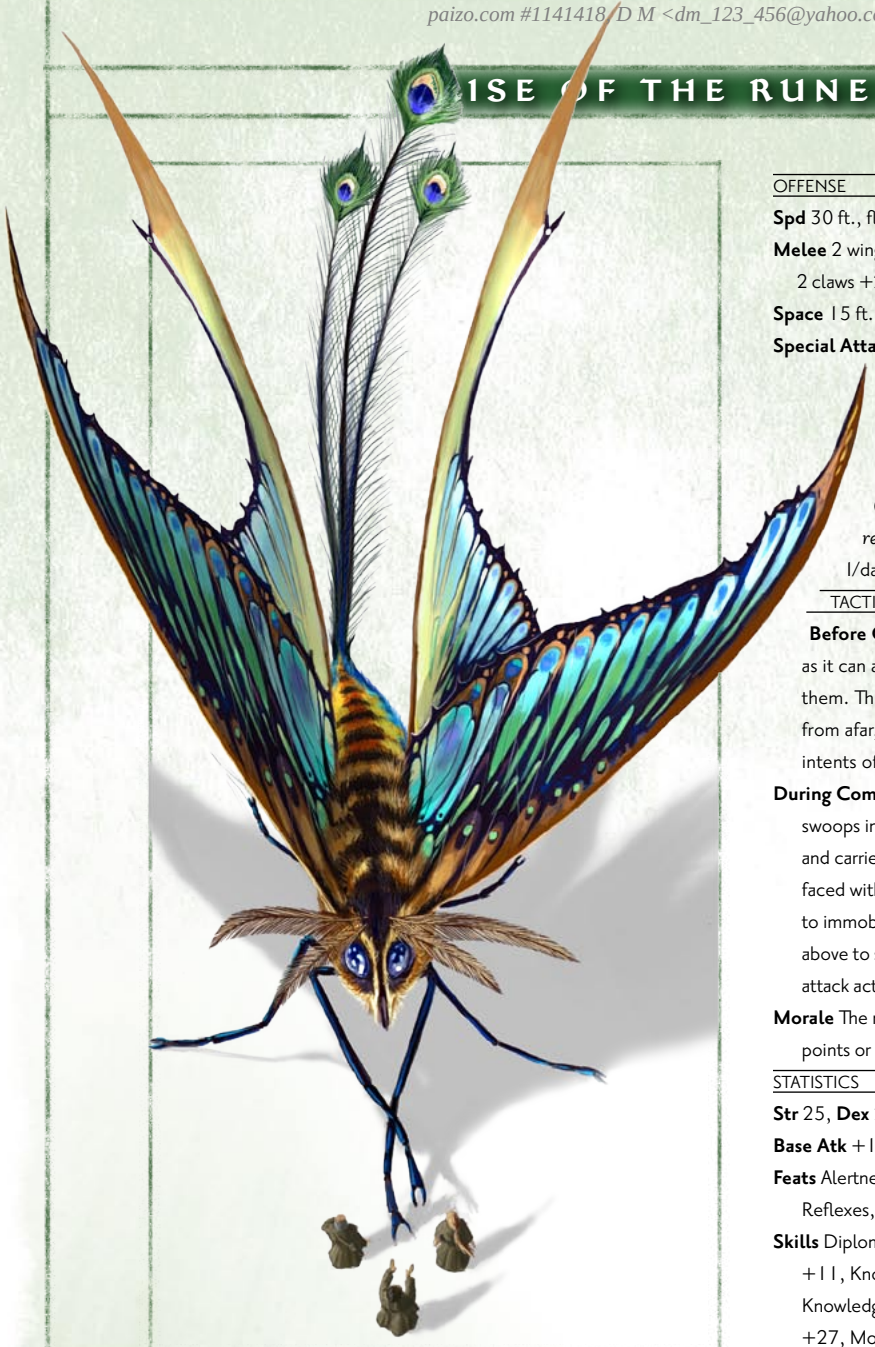
Grazragorgax: The guardian of the gates of the Tower of Salt, Grazragorgax slew the angelic knight Amrodeil centuries ago. It's said that in the demon's lair the angel's blade, *Riftmaker,* still lies.

Lukarazyl: This unusually intelligent shemhazian serves the exiled demon lord Treerazer as an assassin and commander of the demon armies of Tanglebriar. Lukarazyl's hatred of elves is legendary, and he adorns the long spines of his adamantine full plate with elven victims from his frequent raids into Kyonin.

Mawhougav: A shemhazian who strayed into the lower heavens, Mawhugav has remained distracted by a band of lantern archons for nearly 600 years, wistfully listening to their endless stories of Shemhazai's deeds.

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NIGHT MONARCH

This immense butterfly-like creature has the face of a moth, brightly colored wings and body, and a long three-pronged tail that looks like peacock feathers. As it beats its wings, a light misting of sparkling dust falls from them. Its large multifaceted eyes hold within their otherworldly beauty the spark of intelligence and reasoning.

NIGHT MONARCH CR 15

CG Huge outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, good)

Init +10; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +27, Spot +27

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 14, flat-footed 26
(+6 Dex, +18 natural, –2 size)

hp 207 (18d8+126)

DR 15/evil; **Immune** cold, electricity, sleep; **SR** 27

Fort +18, **Ref** +19, **Will** +15

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 120 ft. (average)

Melee 2 wings +23 (2d6+7) and
2 claws +21 (1d8+3)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks adhesive spray, dream dust

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th)
At will—*cure serious wounds, dream, freedom of movement, hypnotic pattern* (DC 26)
3/day—*break enchantment, greater dispel magic, plane shift* (self and willing targets only), *remove curse, remove fear, remove paralysis*
1/day—*hallow* (DC 26), *regenerate*

TACTICS

Before Combat The night monarch gains as much information as it can about potential opponents before it enters combat with them. This frequently results in the night monarch silently watching from afar, using Listen, Sense Motive, and Spot to identify the intents of those it might face.

During Combat Against opponents of mixed sizes, the night monarch swoops in with Flyby Attack, grabs up a Small opponent with Snatch, and carries that foe high into the sky before dropping him. When faced with foes too large for it to snatch, the night monarch attempts to immobilize as many as it can with its adhesive spray, then hovers above to spread its dream dust before descending to make full-attack actions.

Morale The night monarch flees via *plane shift* if reduced to 50 hit points or less.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 22, **Con** 25, **Int** 20, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +33

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Snatch

Skills Diplomacy +30, Handle Animal +28, Heal +25, Hide +11, Knowledge (geography) +26, Knowledge (nature) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Knowledge (the planes) +26, Listen +27, Move Silently +27, Search +26, Sense Motive +25, Spot +27, Survival +25 (+2 when following tracks, +2 above ground, +2 on other planes)

Languages Auran, Celestial, Common (cannot speak), touch telepathy

SQ no breath, poison flesh

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adhesive Spray (Su) A night monarch can emit a spray of sticky, adhesive film once every 1d4 rounds. This creates a 30-foot cone of web-like strands that affect the area as per the spell *web*. Creatures in the area must make a DC 26 Reflex save to avoid becoming entangled. The strands last for 10 minutes before dissolving. The save is Constitution-based.

A night monarch can use this spray in the air. If a flying creature that relies on wings or similar appendages to fly fails its Reflex save it is prevented from flying and falls.

Blindsense (Ex) A night monarch notices and locates creatures within 60 feet. Opponents still have total concealment against a night monarch unless it can actually see them.

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Dream Dust (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a full-round action, the night monarch can flutter its wings and force the dust that clings to them to form a 30-foot-radius burst centered on the night monarch. This dust affects all creatures in the area as per the spell *deep slumber* but with no Hit Die limit. A DC 26 Will save negates this effect. Using dream dust is a standard action a night monarch can use at will. The save DC is Constitution-based.

No Breath (Ex) The night monarch does not breathe. This quality extends to any creatures that it touches or who ride on its back.

Poison Flesh (Ex) The flesh of a night monarch tastes sweet but contains a strong poison (ingested, Fortitude DC 26, initial 1 Con, secondary 1d8 Con). Any creature that succeeds on a bite attack against a night monarch ingests some of this poison. A creature that actively eats the flesh of a dead night monarch takes a –4 penalty on this saving throw. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Touch Telepathy (Su) A night monarch can communicate via telepathy with any creature it touches.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Advancement 19–26 HD (Gargantuan), 27+ HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment —

The night monarch serves the goddess Desna as her herald on Golarion. Although the particulars of its appearance differ every time it is sighted, its common form is that of a titanic moth or butterfly with a brightly colored, 40-foot wingspan that often reflects some aspect of the quest the goddess has willed it upon. In times of great need, the night monarch rises to protect Desna's faithful and combat the most egregious depredations of the Mother of Monsters, Lamashtu. Sighting the night monarch is thought to bring good luck and favorable dreams, which many hold to be visions from the goddess herself.

ECOLOGY

Despite its appearance, the night monarch is not a butterfly and does not fill an ecological niche. In fact, as an outsider it serves no real role in the world's ecology at all. The night monarch does not eat or drink, though some idealistic Desnans believe their good wishes, fond hopes, and sweet smells sustain the creature.

Moths and butterflies seem to be instinctually drawn to the giant creature. Occasionally, when the night monarch comes to rest for a lengthy period of time, such numbers of these delicate insects gather upon its form that, when it finally does take back to the sky, it erupts in an explosion of countless colorful wings.

The night monarch embraces and embodies the portfolio of Desna, especially as it relates to dreams and travelers. It prefers to communicate via dreams, possessing the power to place creatures into a deep, relaxing sleep (which makes communicating with them far easier), then communicating via its *dream* spell-like ability. In more urgent situations, it can use its antennae to telepathically communicate directly with a creature, but it's mind-to-mind speech is often the stuff of riddles, if not blatant non-sequiturs. In addition, the night monarch has at its disposal a wide range of spell-like abilities that facilitate freedom.

STAR MONARCHS

The night monarch is not the only giant, moth-like creature to sail across Golarion. A breed of such awe-inspiring creatures known as star monarchs—thought to be the night monarch's terrestrial offspring and named in its honor—occasionally emerge from their pristine hiding places and float gracefully across the world. Like their celestial cousins, star monarchs carry with them the legend of bringing good fortune and the blessing of Desna.

Despite not being outsiders, star monarchs are more than mere giant butterflies. They have the adhesive spray and poison flesh abilities of night monarchs, but their Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma are roughly half those of their outsider cousins.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Surprisingly stealthy despite its size, the night monarch soars through the sky in near silence. Spotting a monarch (night or star; see sidebar) is considered a sign of good luck and a blessing of Desna. Followers of Desna who spot the night monarch sometimes go so far as to set up shrines to the goddess marking the event.

Desna does not hold a grudge against creatures who attack or kill her herald, unless the killers worship or are otherwise connected with otherworldly evils, particularly the servants of her foe Lamashtu. Being a projection of the goddess's will, even if destroyed the night monarch reappears later in full health—though many theologians theorize that a period of days or weeks must pass before Desna can or is willing to manifest another herald. Desna's mortal worshipers, however, consider attacking the creature to be one of their religion's most severe blasphemies, going to great lengths to avenge the creature's temporary death.

Many stories of the night monarch tell of innocents or pious worshipers of Desna escaping peril on the creature's back. Despite its seemingly fragile form, the giant insect can carry great weights at swift speeds, sweeping the goddess's favorites hastily on to their destinies. The night monarch can carry 2 Large, 8 Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive riders. One myth of the great beast tells of a whole army of sprightly lyrakien (see *Pathfinder* #2) sweeping in to combat a horde of goblins from the night monarch's back.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for the night monarch is up to 798 pounds; a medium load, 799–1,599 pounds; and a heavy load, 1,600–2,400 pounds.

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YETHAZMARI

Double the size of a man at its shoulder, this creature looks like a gigantic, starving jackal, but from its back beat the tattered black wings of a monstrous bat. A canine head sprouts from where it would be natural for one to rest, but behind, where the creature's tail should begin, instead sways the sleek, strong coils of a viper, ending in a fanged head that arcs over the monster's back. Twin trails of thin smoke, like those from dying embers, rise from where the thing's jackal eyes should be, roiling up from depthless hollows gaping in the horror's snarling visage.

YETHAZMARI **CR 15**

CE Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +29, Spot +29

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 14, flat-footed 27
(+5 Dex, +18 natural, –1 size)

hp 189 (18d8+108)

DR 15/good; **Immune** fire; **SR** 27

Fort +17, **Ref** +16, **Will** +17

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.; fly 100 ft. (good)

Melee bite +24 (1d8+7/19–20) and
tail +19 (1d6+3 plus poison)

Ranged poison gout +22 (6d10 acid plus poison)

Special Attacks bay, maddening vision

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th)
At will—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *locate creature*, *rage* (DC 18), *veil* (DC 22),
3/day—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20), *feeblemind* (DC 20), *greater dispel magic*, *plane shift* (self and willing targets only), *summon monster IV*
1/day—*control weather*, *unhallow* (DC 20)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 20, **Con** 22, **Int** 17, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +29

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Balance +17, Bluff +27, Climb +17, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +29, Move Silently +26, Search +24, Spellcraft +24, Spot +21, Survival +27 (+29 to follow tracks), Tumble +28

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

SQ soul scream

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bay (Su) When a yethazmari howls or barks, all creatures except other evil outsiders within a 300-foot-radius spread must succeed on a DC 25 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting fear effect. Whether or not the save is successful, an affected creature is immune to the same yethazmari's bay for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Maddening Vision (Su) A yethazmari can unleash a blast of abyssal smoke from its eyes (25-foot cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 12d10 fire, Reflex DC 25 half). Creatures of an alignment other than chaotic that are damaged by this effect must make additional DC 25 Will saves as their minds are assaulted with unspeakable visions. Those who fail this save are affected as per the spell *confusion* for 1d6 rounds. These save DCs are Constitution-based.

Poison (Su) Contact or injury, Fortitude DC 25, initial damage 2d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison Gout (Su) A yethazmari can use its serpentine head to spit a gout of burning, acidic poison at a creature within 30 feet as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack that deals 6d10 points of acid damage. Any creature damaged by the attack is affected by the yethazmari's poison.

Soul Scream (Su) Any time a yethazmari takes piercing or slashing

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damage from any source, the wounds created in its flesh unleash a terrifying cacophony. This is terrible noise has the same effects as the creature's bay special attack. Creatures within 10 feet of the yethazmari take a –4 penalty on their save versus this effect.

ECOLOGY

Environment any
Organization solitary
Treasure none
Advancement 19–26 HD (Large), 27+ HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment —

Said to howl through the lightless sky on the nights of lunar eclipses, hunting for lone travelers to drag back to Lamashtu's realm, the yethazmari is the herald of the Mother of Monsters. A 14-foot-tall poisonous jackal with a snake for a tail and wings as black as pitch, the yethazmari is known to be among Lamashtu's favorite offspring, as well as her lapdog. Having hunted at the Demon Queen's side for untold centuries and witnessed some of her most profane atrocities, the thing's eyes have burnt to smoldering coals, loose in the depths of its skull. Now it sees only worlds undone, endless ruinous visions of reality rent at the claws of the Mother of Monsters.

ECOLOGY

When and where the yethazmari comes to the Material Plane, ruin follows. Ravenous, though it feels no hunger, and rapacious, though it knows no lust, every act the yethazmari commits is an atrocity in honor of its unholy mistress. It delights in causing wild storms to serve as backdrops for its vicious hunts, dragging its best catches back to lay them at Lamashtu's taloned feet.

Although Lamashtu's herald has no need to procreate, in its centuries-long existence it has proven as fecund as its parent, both mothering and siring unspeakable progeny. No one can hope to name or count all of the abominations that have sprung from deformed loins as a result of the yethazmari's poison seed, though the Gytrash of Gralton; Belkzen's seemingly impervious Juggerloathe; and Isger's cackling, eyeless swaithes are said to be but a few. The most widely spread and successful of its scions, though, are the extraplanar predators supposedly named in the herald's profane honor: yeth hounds. In the ages since the first of this sinister litter was spawned, these malicious canines have bred true and expanded their hunting grounds far across the Lower Planes. The eldest and most purely bred yeth hounds still possess jackal-like features and speak Abyssal, the language of their mother and divine grandparent.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

As much as the yethazmari delights in the war-torn devastation of the Abyss, it exalts in every opportunity to rampage upon the Material Plane. Lamashtu allows her herald to wander when it pleases her, though it spends most of its time at her side, eager to be commanded.

On the rare occasions Lamashtu sends her herald to Golarion, the servants of the Mother of Monsters flock to its side—an act of dangerous fanaticism as the beast is just as likely to prey upon allies as foes. Several times in recorded history has the yethazmari been seen at the head of legions of ravening monsters, aiding if not leading such deadly hordes. Worshipers of Lamashtu claim that no host joined by the Demon Queen's herald has ever been defeated (a suspect claim at best). Thus, when the multitudes of the Mother of Monsters gather, they often create crude effigies of the yethazmari to carry before them, inspiring the dull-witted and poorly-sighted among them to acts of fearless brutality.

Legends of the yethazmari often say that it is accompanied by a pack of powerful yeth hounds known as the Black Hunt. These yeth hounds claim direct parentage from the herald and are among the oldest and strongest of their kind. Should the yethazmari be killed on the Material Plane it is said that his essence chooses one from among this pack to bind with, resurrecting the ancient fiend. Aside from the yethazmari itself, Kirukakarung is the most powerful of the Black Hunt's members. This insane, sadistic queen of yeth hounds constantly bleeds from an elaborate series of metal piercings threaded through her back to mimic the yethazmari's wings, given to her by Lamashtu herself.

HERALDS OF THE GODS

Most of Golarion's deities have heralds, favored messengers and living embodiments of their will (though not necessarily their most powerful servants). Heralds appear in the mortal world only when serving the whims of their deities or when summoned by worshipers in their deities' highest favor. In any case, even glimpsing one of the storied heralds of the gods is on par with witnessing a miracle.

Rules-wise, heralds are powerful, deity-specific outsiders that can be called by the use of *greater planer ally* (*greater planar binding* cannot summon a herald). Although this contradicts some previous information presented in *Pathfinder* #2, most heralds will be approximately CR 15 outsiders with 18 or fewer Hit Dice (you might want to consider weaker versions of Desna's herald as star monarchs, described on page 87). Only a deity's worshipers can summon its herald, and as such, a cleric of Lamashtu could not summon the night monarch any more than a cleric of Desna could summon the yethazmari. Although this is arguably true with every divine spell, a deity has the final say in whether or not its herald answers a worshiper's summons, granting the creature's service only to followers in extreme need or whose acts further the deity's will. For example, Desna would probably not allow her herald to answer the summons of a cleric who merely wants to use its *remove paralysis* ability, but might allow it to appear to help evacuate a pious community threatened by an erupting volcano. An attempt to summon a herald should be a climactic event, with the GM being the final arbiter on whether or not a herald appears.

—Wes Schneider

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VALEROS

MALE HUMAN FIGHTER 12

ALIGN NG **INIT** +9 **SPEED** 30 ft.

DEITY Cayden Cailean **HOMELAND** Andoran

ABILITIES

18	STR
20	DEX
16	CON
13	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 106

AC 26
touch 17, flat-footed 21

Fort +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Melee +2 *frost cold iron longsword* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+10/17–20 plus 1d6 cold) or
+1 *frost longsword* +18/+12/+8 (1d8+10/17–20 plus 1d6 cold) and
+1 *short sword* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+3/19–20)
Ranged +1 *comp longbow* +18/+13/+8 (1d8+5/×3)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +16

SKILLS

Climb	+16
Intimidate	+15
Ride	+20
Swim	+13

FEATS

Big Game Hunter[B], Combat Expertise, Greater Two-Wpn. Fighting, Greater Wpn. Focus (longsword), Greater Wpn. Spec. (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Wpn. Fighting, Power Attack, Two-Wpn. Defense, Two-Wpn. Fighting, Wpn. Focus (longsword), Wpn. Focus (short sword), Wpn. Spec. (longsword)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (3); **Other Gear** +3 *mithral breastplate*, +2 *frost cold iron longsword*, +1 *short sword*, +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str) with 20 arrows, silver dagger, *amulet of health* +4, *belt of giant strength* +4, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, backpack, lucky tankard, rations (6), 50 ft. silk rope, 50 pp, 17 gp

Born a farmer's son in the quiet Andorian countryside, Valeros spent his youth dreaming of adventure and exploring the world. For the past several years, he's done exactly that, having been a mercenary with the Band of the Mauler, a guard for the Aspis Consortium, a freelance bounty hunter, and hired muscle for a dozen different employers in as many lands. Gone is his youthful naivete, replaced by scars and the resolve of a veteran warrior. Although he possesses a keen wit, he finds the simplest, most direct approach is often the best, and has little patience for convoluted schemes or magical chicanery. While noble at heart, Valeros hides this beneath a jaded, sometimes crass demeanor, often claiming that there's no better way to end a day's adventuring than with "an evening of hard drinking and a night of soft company."



SEONI

FEMALE HUMAN SORCERER 12

ALIGN LN **INIT** +3 **SPEED** 30 ft.

DEITY Pharasma **HOMELAND** Varisia

ABILITIES

8	STR
16	DEX
12	CON
10	INT
13	WIS
22	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 43

AC 22
touch 15, flat-footed 19

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Melee *staff of fire* +5 (1d6–1)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Spells Known (CL 12th, 13th evocation)
6th (4/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 24)
5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 23), *teleport*
4th (7/day)—*dimension door*, *ice storm*, *wall of fire*
3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 21)
2nd (8/day)—*invisibility*, *mirror image*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *web*
1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 19), *endure elements*, *enlarge person*, *magic missile*, *shield*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
1/day—*dancing lights*

SKILLS

Bluff	+21
Climb	+2
Concentration	+16
Listen	+3
Spellcraft	+15
Spot	+3

FEATS

Alertness (from familiar), Dodge, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Maximize Spell, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration, Varisian Tattoo (evocation)[B]

FAMILIAR

Dragon (blue-tailed skink: as lizard, MM 275)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *rod of lesser empower metamagic*, *staff of fire* (25 charges), scroll of *fireball*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 9th, 50 charges); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *bracers of armor* +5, *cloak of Charisma* +4, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +2, *handy haversack*, everburning torch, rations (4), 60 pp, 34 gp

Despite being a consummate adventurer, Seoni is something of an enigma to her compatriots. Quietly neutral on most matters, bound by codes and mandates that she rarely feels compelled to explain, the sorceress keeps her emotions tightly bottled. Extremely detail-oriented—a trait that has led Merisiel to often call her a "control freak"—Seoni is a careful and meticulous planner, a schemer who frequently finds herself frustrated by the improvised plans of her more impulsive companions. Despite all of this, Seoni has stuck by her comrades through numerous tight spots, a fact that continues to amaze and confuse Valeros, who often wonders loudly (although not altogether unappreciatively) about "the witch and her schemes."

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MERISIEL

FEMALE ELF ROGUE 12

ALIGN CN **INIT** +7 **SPEED** 40 ft.

DEITY Calistria **HOMELAND** Varisia

ABILITIES

12	STR
24	DEX
12	CON
8	INT
13	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 56

AC 24
touch 17, flat-footed 19

Fort +5, **Ref** +16, **Will** +5 (+6 against enchantment)

Defense evasion, trap sense +4, improved uncanny dodge; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Melee +1 *keen rapier* +17/+12 (1d6+2/15–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +17/+12 (1d4+1/19–20)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10

Special Attack crippling strike, sneak attack +6d6

SKILLS

Bluff	+13
Disable Device	+11
Hide	+19
Jump	+27
Listen	+11
Move Silently	+19
Open Lock	+16
Search	+11
Sleight of Hand	+16
Spot	+13
Tumble	+22

FEATS

City Born[B], Dodge, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** *+3 shadow silent moves studded leather armor, +1 keen rapier,* masterwork daggers (12), *amulet of natural armor +1, boots of striding and springing, gloves of Dexterity +4, ring of invisibility, ring of protection* +2, rations (3), masterwork thieves' tools, polished jade worth 50 gp, 15 pp

Merisiel's life experiences have taught her to enjoy things to their fullest as they occur, since it's impossible to tell when the good times might end. Just over a century old—still an adolescent as her people count age—she's already grown used to watching her friends grow old. She's open and expressive with her thoughts and emotions, and never hesitates to make them known when things go wrong. Never the sharpest knife in the drawer, Merisiel makes up for this by carrying at least a dozen of them on her person. She hasn't met a problem yet that can't, in one way or another, be solved with things that slice. While she's always on the move and working on her latest batch of plots for easy money, in the end it comes down to being faster than everyone else—either on her feet, or with her beloved blades. She wouldn't have it any other way.



KYRA

FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 12

ALIGN NG **INIT** –1 **SPEED** 20 ft.

DEITY Sarenrae **HOMELAND** Qadira

ABILITIES

13	STR
8	DEX
14	CON
10	INT
24	WIS
12	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 81

AC 24
touch 11, flat-footed 24

Fort +11, **Ref** +4, **Will** +18

OFFENSE

Melee +1 *holy scimitar* +12/+7 (1d6+2/18–20)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10
Special Attacks greater turning 1/day, turn undead 8/day (+3, 2d6+13)
Spells Prepared (CL 12th, +4 ranged touch)
6th—*blade barrier* (DC 23), *heal*[D], *greater dispel magic, heroes' feast*
5th—*flame strike*[D] (DC 22), *righteous might, slay living* (DC 22) *spell resistance, summon monster V*
4th—*air walk, divine power, fire shield*[D], *freedom of movement, restoration*
3rd—*daylight, dispel magic* (2), *prayer* (2), *remove disease, searing light*[D]
2nd—*aid, bull's strength, heat metal*[D] (DC 19), *resist energy* (2), *spiritual weapon* (2)
1st—*bless* (2), *cure light wounds*[D], *divine favor* (2), *sanctuary* (DC 18), *shield of faith* (2)
0—*detect magic* (2), *light, mending* (3)
D domain spell; **Domains** healing, sun

SKILLS

Concentration	+17
Heal	+20
Knowledge (religion)	+15

FEATS

Combat Casting, Country Born[B], Extra Turning, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Quicken Spell, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Combat Gear holy water (3), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (40 charges), *wand of lesser restoration* (25 charges); **Other Gear** *+3 chainmail, +3 heavy steel shield, +1 holy scimitar, cloak of resistance +1, periapt of Wisdom +6, ring of protection* +2, backpack, gold holy symbol (with *continual flame*) worth 300 gp, rations (4), 10 pp

Possessed of a fierce will, pride in her faith, and skill with the scimitar, Kyra lost her family and home to raiders. Yet where another might be consumed by a thirst for revenge, Kyra has found peace in the Dawnflower and in the belief that, if she can prevent even one death at evil hands, her own losses will not have been in vain. She does not see herself as an evangelist and saves her sermonizing for those with ears to hear her enlightenment—a virtue largely learned after many frustrating philosophical arguments with Merisiel and Valeros.

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by Greg A. Vaughan

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